

The
Christian Life Made Plain

REV. RICHARD FERGUSON

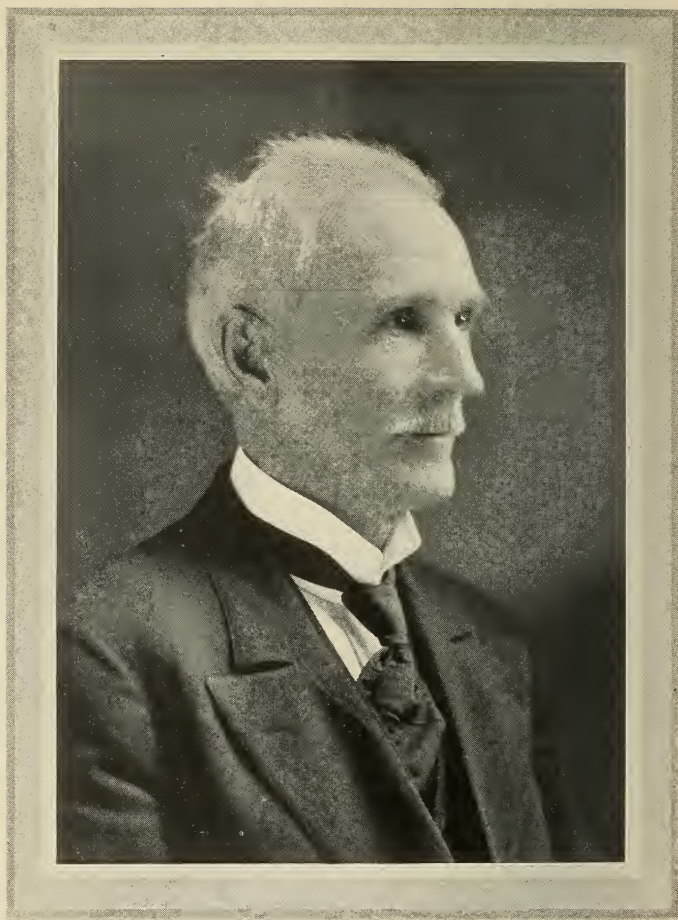


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Rich^d. Ferguson

The
Christian Life Made Plain

A Treatise on Experimental Religion
followed by
Sermons on Doctrinal and Practical Themes
and
An Alumni Address
Delivered at
Randolph-Macon College



By
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Of the Virginia Conference
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With an Introduction by
REV. J. T. WHITLEY, D. D.



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Dedicated to
The Virginia Conference
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH
AND TO
ALL INQUIRERS AFTER THE TRUTH
AS IT IS IN CHRIST

Virginia Conference, for his invaluable services in editing the manuscript and helping in every way to bring this volume to completion. Surely, I have been greatly blessed in having his faithful and scholarly services.

With these few words of explanation, I send forth this humble contribution to the spiritual good of my fellow-men, praying that God's blessing may abide upon every reader, and help him to see more clearly the upward way that leads to life eternal.

RICHARD FERGUSON.

Introduction

MY honored friend and brother, the author of this book, was born in Dinwiddie county, Virginia, October 3, 1838, united with the Methodist Church at the age of thirteen, and graduated from Randolph-Macon College, Va., in 1858, receiving the degrees of Bachelor and Master of Arts. For many years he has been a member of the Board of Trustees of the College.

At the outbreak of the Civil War he was preparing for the gospel ministry, but felt constrained to enlist in the Confederate army, and served in Company G, Eighteenth Virginia Infantry, first as private and later as lieutenant, to the close of the war. He was twice wounded in battle, and was taken prisoner at Gettysburg. There he took part in the celebrated charge of Pickett's Division, and is said to have fired the last gun from his Division in that battle.

After the war he engaged in farming and teaching for a time, and was licensed as a local preacher in 1868. Having served for a year as assistant pastor of a circuit, he was received on trial into the Virginia Conference in November, 1869, and entered upon the full pastorate. As preacher and pastor he served many charges with conspicuous fidelity and success, honored and loved by his brethren of the ministry and by the people among whom he labored. After fifty years of

continuous service in the active ministry, he retired to the superannuate relation in November, 1918, just after passing his eightieth birthday. For reasons of health and family ties he settled in Tampa, Florida, where he and his devoted wife are enjoying a well-earned rest.

Not willing to regard his ministry as terminated by superannuation, this veteran minister has put into the present volume the ripe fruits of many years of study and experience, in the hope that it may convey to others a message of salvation after he has passed away. Without expectation of pecuniary benefit, he is financing the book out of his own limited resources, for the glory of God and the benefit of mankind. The reader will find here many valuable lessons, copiously illustrated and strongly fortified by apt quotations from the Holy Scriptures. The chapter on Conversion has been pronounced especially clear and helpful by those who heard the author preach on this vital theme. The sermons on Baptism also have been received with much favor.

Having read this book in manuscript, and rendered some service in putting it through the press, I commend it cordially to all who love the old-fashioned gospel and desire to see more clearly the Christian way from earth to heaven.

J. T. WHITLEY.

Norfolk, Va., 1922.

Contents

	PAGE
PREFACE	5
INTRODUCTION	7
CONTENTS	9
THE CHRISTIAN LIFE MADE PLAIN	
The Initial Step	11
Preparatory Steps	20
The Beginning of the Christian Life.....	29
Conversion, or Regeneration.....	35
Evidences of the Christian Life.....	45
Witness of the Spirit.....	56
Growth in Grace.....	63
Conditions of Growth.....	75
Sanctification, or Maturity in Grace.....	92
The Christian's History in Brief.....	104
SERMONS	
Christ the Only Foundation.....	121
The Lamb of God.....	134
Watchfulness Enjoined	147
Present Suffering and Future Glory.....	160
The Preciousness of Jesus.....	173
Sympathy for the Slain.....	182
The All-Important Question.....	195
The Design of Baptism.....	206
The Mode of Baptism.....	216
Dedication of Children to Christ in Baptism.....	229
Objections to Infant Baptism Answered.....	243
ADDRESS TO ALUMNI SOCIETY	
John Bunyon and the Pilgrim's Progress.....	255

The Christian Life Made Plain



CHAPTER I.

THE INITIAL STEP

I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.—Psalm 119:59.

THOUGHT is the preliminary step to the Christian life. All intelligent action is based upon thought—deep, serious, solemn thought. By it the world is moved. The great thinkers are the great actors, and the great actors are the great benefactors. Without thought Galileo watching the lamp swaying back and forth in the Church at Pisa would not have derived the laws of motion which led to the use of the pendulum; nor would Newton have deduced the laws of gravitation from the falling of apples to the earth. Without profound thought Watt and Fulton had never utilized steam, nor Whitney invented the cotton gin, nor Franklin plucked the lightning from the clouds. Without deep reflection Edison, Marconi and others could never have applied electricity in so many useful ways. Only by persistent thought were the great masters—Phidias and Apollodorus, Raphael and Michelangelo, and other men of genius—enabled to produce their sublime works of art

on canvas or in stone. It was by deep and persistent thought that Milton wrote *Paradise Lost*, Bunyan the Pilgrim's Progress, and Shakespeare his immortal plays.

The same thing is true in other departments of life, in the moral realm as well as in the material world. Without profound and patient thought Moses and David, Peter and Paul, could not have produced the literature that has made them so potent in the history of mankind. Thought is not only the initial step in the Christian life, but it is equally necessary to its continuance and progress. It is the way to the knowledge of God, of self, of duty, of heaven, and indeed of all truth. The sensibilities and the will are reached through the intellect. Truth is first received by the mind, then entertained by the affections, and afterwards approved and applied by the will.

On the other hand, thoughtlessness is the fruitful source of error, folly and sin. Because of thoughtlessness Israel was betrayed into folly, for which the prophet Isaiah accused them of being more stubborn and silly than the sullen ox or the stupid ass: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." Multitudes out in the world are in darkness, fast bound in Satan's chains because they do not think; and not a few members of the Church of God are lean and lank in soul for the same cause. Let the reader stop and question himself whether these things are so.

As to the forms that thought may assume, it should be noted that it often takes the form of Meditation. The scope of this is general, and it may dwell upon things past, or present, or future—upon God, or heaven, or

eternity. David, meditating upon the works of nature, exclaims: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun; which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof." And again, meditating in the law of God, he continues: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward." And his holy meditation leads to that earnest prayer: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer" (Psalm 19). In harmony with this is the description of the godly man in the First Psalm: "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

Again, thought may take the form of Self-Examination. Here it begins the study of self. Alexander Pope declares:

"The proper study of mankind is man;" and the old Greek philosopher Thales used to say to each of his disciples: "Know thyself." A still higher authority, the apostle Paul, utters the admonition to Christians: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." By this process we find out what we owe to God, our neighbor and ourselves. It is important both to becoming Christ's disciples and continuing in His fellowship. It is like an artist drawing an accurate portrait of every one in view. It is a mirror into which we may look and behold our features. It is a window that lets in the light; a key that unlocks the secret chambers of the soul. Would that men would examine themselves with a closer scrutiny! By this process let us go down into the depths of our hearts and view their inmost recesses, which are hidden from all eyes but those of God and ourselves. Let us take the lamp of past experience and the guide-book of God's Word, the microscope of truth, and the telescope of faith, and study ourselves till we become thoroughly acquainted with the state of mind and heart. And let us do this, not once or twice only, but often as the days and years go by, so that the best results may follow.

Moreover, thought may take the form of Reflection, in which the mind turns itself backward. This is what the psalmist meant when he said in the words that head this chapter: "I thought on my ways." As if he had said: "I pondered over them, I counted them through and through, I turned them upside down, I looked at them from every standpoint." Dr. Adam Clarke says: "The word as here used is a metaphor taken from embroidering, where the figure must appear the same on the one side as it does on the

other; therefore the cloth must be turned on each side every time the needle is set in." Every sinner who will thus closely and narrowly reflect upon his ways, as the psalmist did, will find them crooked and perverse. He will see that he is out of harmony with God, and that the condemnation of the Almighty is resting upon him. Oh, that men could be induced to reflect upon their ways! For, as the poet says:

"'Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours,
And ask them what report they bore to heaven."

There is a story told of a wild young man, to whom a curious ring was given, engraved with a death's-head, and the condition named was that he should spend a part of every day in looking at it and thinking of it. In a spirit of wantonness he accepted the gift, but was led to keep his promise and examine it with serious diligence. It is said that a wonderful change was wrought in his life, and that pondering the significance of the ring led to his transformation from a desperate sinner to a faithful servant of God.

It is evident, however, that it is not enough merely to think, and that to be effective thought must be followed by action. The psalmist not only said: "I thought on my ways," but also he said to the Lord: "I turned my feet unto thy testimonies." So must every one do who would find favor with God. This implies repentance and acceptance of the Scriptural terms of salvation—"repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." There are those who think, but turn elsewhere than to God for relief, looking to themselves or to the world for help. Turning their backs upon the only Saviour, they seek to drown conviction and

stifle the pleadings of conscience. But he who sincerely desires to be a Christian must repent and turn to God through Christ. By thought becoming fully convinced of his sinful, lost, ruined condition, he must betake himself to Christ and His word for relief and safety. And if any man will only do his part, he need not fear but that God, the almighty, gracious, merciful, loving Father, will come to his help. The prophet Ezekiel received this charge from God: "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. 33: 11). And Paul says to the Romans: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8: 32).

In view of these great truths, the appeal here made is that men shall think, and that thought shall lead to action, and that action shall be without delay. This is what the psalmist did—he acted at once. Said he: "I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments." He felt that such a matter could not be postponed. And surely, in a matter of such momentous concern there should be no hesitating or halting between two opinions. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." With all speed the guilty one should run to the cross of Christ, where alone refuge can be found. Bunyan represents his pilgrim as making no stop, not even to salute anyone by the way; but stuffing his fingers into his ears, he runs with all his might. Or, as Dr. Clarke puts it: "I did not stand, What, What, Whatting;" or as we say, dilly-dallying, or shilly-shallying.

All delays are dangerous. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Eccles. 9: 10). "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. 27: 1) .

"Be wise to-day, 'tis madness to defer:
Next day the fatal precedent will plead;
Thus on, till wisdom is pushed out of life.
Procrastination is the thief of time;
Year after year it steals, till all are fled,
And to the mercies of a moment leaves
The vast concerns of an eternal scene."

The Devil is never better pleased than when he can get a sinner to put off his return to the Lord until another day. Stop and think, and then act upon your convictions without waiting for a "convenient season." How many victories have been lost by delaying till to-morrow! During the Civil War, at the first battle of Manassas, when the Federal troops were routed, General Beauregard lost the grandest opportunity of his life to win a great success, by delaying till the next day. It is thought also that General Lee lost a golden opportunity when he did not attack Burnside's forces the very night of the Federal defeat at Fredericksburg; and that General Meade lost a similar chance at Gettysburg by failing to press Lee's army at once after the third day's disastrous assault. An ancient story tells us that a letter was sent by messenger to Archias, the Grecian magistrate, to inform him that a plot had been formed against his life. The messenger was charged to tell him to read the letter at once, as it contained serious matters. But Archias was flushed with wine and

revelry, and lightly replied: "Serious matters to-morrow!" But to-morrow never came to him, for that same night he and all his companions were slain. Ah! how many have paid the penalty of "to-morrow!" How many have lost their opportunity and wrecked their souls forever upon that fatal rock!

Dear reader, if you are a Christian and wish to make progress in the way of the righteous, or if perchance you have gone astray, follow the example of the psalmist, think upon your ways, and turn at once to the testimonies of the Lord; make haste and delay not to keep His commandments.

If you are a sinner, just stop and think, and make a resolution and a revolution; face about and rush into the kingdom. I once heard a man who had been a drunkard tell how he became a sober man: "I just stopped and thought: this thing is going to ruin me, soul and body, and I mean to quit it now and forever." And he did quit it then and there. How was it with the Prodigal Son? He did not start back to his father's house until he began to think. It was only after "he came to himself" and began to reflect that he said, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Then he arose and hastened to his father, and a right royal welcome he received. Thus will it ever be with the prodigals who think and repent and return!

A certain minister at a camp-meeting saw a young man leaning against a tree, looking sad and forlorn. His clothes were ragged and his feet were bare. The minister ap-

proached him and asked: "Are you not willing to come to Christ?" The young man replied: "I have been thinking about it, and I wish I could; but I am ashamed to go and kneel as a penitent, lest the people laugh at me." "Ah," said the minister, "come just as you are. I remember a young man just like you. His feet were bare, his garments were tattered. He had gone away from his father's house, had wasted his substance, and was eating with the swine. But he thought of his father's house where there was enough and to spare." "Oh," interrupted the man, "that's in the Bible, isn't it?" "Yes," answered the minister; whereupon the young man went forward at once, bowed before his Heavenly Father, and found welcome and peace. So may it be with every sinner whose eyes may fall upon these lines! Make haste to return: for—

" 'Tis God's all-animating voice
That calls thee from on high;
'Tis His own hand presents the prize
To thine aspiring eye:

"That prize, with peerless glories bright,
Which shall new luster boast,
When victors' wreaths and monarchs' gems
Shall blend in common dust."

CHAPTER II.

PREPARATORY STEPS

Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.—Luke 3:4.

IT was customary for Eastern monarchs in undertaking a journey, especially through a wilderness or desert country, to send messengers before them to announce their coming. Pioneers also were sent to prepare the way by levelling the hills and filling up the valleys, making the crooked ways straight and the rough places smooth.

In harmony with this custom the prophet Isaiah uttered the words at the head of this chapter, in foretelling the mission of John the Baptist who became the harbinger of Christ. John prepared the way for the Messiah by preaching repentance and exhorting the people to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance." To the multitude of Jews who attended upon his ministry he said: "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father," by which he meant to warn them against trusting to their descent, or to their connection with the visible Church and enjoying its external privileges. These things have no saving power, but repentance must be shown by its proper results. "Every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." As to the nature of this fruit, he explained to the people when he said: "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise." Also to the

publicans he said: "Exact no more than that which is appointed you." And to the soldiers he gave the admonition: "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages." His word to Herod was: For-sake your adulterous relationship with Herodias, your brother Philip's wife. Thus John the Forerunner exhorted all to do right, to love justice, mercy and truth, and to walk humbly with God. Such was the preparation the gospel harbinger admonished all classes of the people to make in order to receive Christ.

"The way of the Lord" is the heart of every man, and each one is in eminent degree his own pioneer. No man can do this work of preparation absolutely for another. God Himself cannot, or will not, do it without the concurrence of man's will. "We are labourers together with God," and He works while we work. Hence the apostle Paul exhorts the Philippians: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12, 13). Here we see God and man coöperating, and man must open the door before God can enter.

The command to prepare the way of the Lord implies that the heart is in a state of unpreparedness. All human experience proves that this is even so. The prophet Jeremiah declares: "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Jesus declared: "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matt. 15:19). In its natural state the human heart is like a wilderness where wild beasts roam and ravage, where the hills are high and rough and

need to be levelled down, where the valleys and gorges are deep and must be filled, and where the rushing streams must be bridged, before the traveler can pass with safety. To drop the figure, all sin must be abandoned and the stubborn will subdued, before God can enter the heart and set up His kingdom, whose characteristics are "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Submission, then, is the first thing to be done in preparing the way for the King. An unyielding will is an impassable barrier, a veritable Gibraltar, which defies Omnipotence and must be battered down. Against it every force must be hurled until the surrender is complete. Not that the will does the work of regeneration, but it yields to God that He may do it. Until the will is subdued Christ cannot enter and abide in any heart. Self-denial is refusing to follow one's own will, and is a necessary condition of discipleship; for Christ declared: "If any man will (is willing to) come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). When a man begins to yield, the language of his heart will be: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Then will follow earnest prayer and sincere repentance. Not that these have been absent before, for they have helped to subdue the will and to show that it is subdued; but there will be deep penitence and fervent prayer for deliverance from sin. The needy, longing soul, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, will cry for help from above. Like the publican in the temple, he will pray: "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Or, like the blind beggar of Jericho: "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" The words of David in the Fifty-first Psalm will

spring to his lips: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." Repentance and prayer are like a plough-share, breaking up the fallow ground of the heart and fitting it for the reception of the gospel seed. Without these there can be no suitable preparation for the coming of the King. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." While it is true that "the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord," it is likewise true that "the prayer of the upright is his delight" (Prov. 15:8).

When our friends notify us of an approaching visit we begin to set the house in order, so as to make all needed preparation to receive them with a hospitable welcome and to give them proper entertainment. The housewife is sure to put the various rooms in order, removing dust and stains and whatever might lessen the pleasure of the coming guests. So it must be when the visitor is Christ, who will soon stand at the door and knock. Sin has defiled the heart with many dark spots and blots, and it requires much hard scouring upon our knees to remove the stains. The soap of the Word too must be freely used. Thus as our own efforts are aided by God's coöperating grace, the heart is cleansed and becomes a fit temple for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. God neither prays, nor repents, nor believes for any man, but He helps the man to do these things for himself. We may rest assured that He is ever ready to do His part when we are ready to do ours. Therefore, I repeat, each one is in a preëminent sense his own pioneer in the work of his salvation. Remove, then, all barriers from your heart, whatever they may be.

"Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Drive out all enemies of Christ. If it be a worldly spirit, put it away. If it be pride, lust, anger, revenge, covetousness, or evil of any other kind, banish and destroy it. Just one cherished sin has kept many a man or woman from becoming a Christian—such as inordinate love of the world, indulgence of unlawful desire, an unforgiving disposition, unwillingness to make restitution, and such like things. How many have been brought at length to confess that fondness for the theatre, opera, dance, card-table, or intoxicating drink, has kept Christ out of their hearts!

During a revival meeting a lady presented herself again and again at the altar for the prayers of the church. I became deeply interested in her case, gave her counsel as best I could, and when she still lingered I insisted upon knowing what was the difficulty in her way. At last she frankly confessed that there was just one thing that kept her from finding peace with God and becoming a Christian, and that was a feeling of hatred toward a certain woman who had injured her. To this I could only say: "You cannot expect to be forgiven unless you forgive, for our Lord Himself declared: 'If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.'"

At another meeting a lady came to the altar, and when I began to talk with her she said: "Tell my husband to come here. He is a member of the church, but he is not right." He came to her side, and while the congregation was singing the husband and wife talked together and then returned to their seats. At the close of the service she gave me a pressing invitation to go to her home, which I accepted.

Later in the day this explanation was made concerning the events that had taken place at the church: The husband was engaged in the lumber business with his father, who lived near by; but there had been no friendly relations between the two families for nearly twelve months, on account of causes that were comparatively trivial. This state of things had become a barrier in the way of the spiritual prosperity of the parties concerned. After hearing the matter stated, I made the suggestion that we should go over to the house of my host's father in the evening; and on our arrival we were cordially received and kindly treated. The visit proved to be a pleasant one, and at its close we held worship together. Among the results that followed was the conversion of my host's two sisters, and the revival received a new impetus. Needless to say, the friendly relations of the two families were restored, and the disquieted hearts found peace.

But you ask: What is faith? There are some things that cannot be simplified, because they have been reduced to their last analysis. If you ask the chemist, What is water? he answers: "It is composed of hydrogen and oxygen in certain proportions." If then you ask: What are oxygen and hydrogen? he replies: "They are gases that have certain properties." And here he reaches the last analysis. To say that faith is trust, reliance, recumbency, as many books have it, does not give a full explanation. It is said that John Wesley, in one of his class meetings, had up the question: "What is saving faith?" A godly sister suggested: "It is taking God at His word." Mr. Wesley replied: "That is enough; let us adopt that definition." Perhaps no better definition of faith can be given than the one set forth by

Horace Bushnell: "Faith is the act by which one person, a sinner, commits himself to another person, a Saviour." Every little child who accepts without question the word of father or mother is exercising filial faith. If you were lost in some wilderness, and there should come along some one who knew the way out, and whose word you could trust, it would be natural and easy for you to follow him as your guide. So we are to look to Jesus as our Guide, who will conduct us out of the wilderness of sin. "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith," we shall find safe guidance.

In carrying forward its gracious work, faith has efficient allies and helpers. Hear what the apostle Peter says with reference to it: "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:5-8). Of these allies, all of which serve as props to faith, I call attention at present to but one, and that is Patience, which conveys the idea of perseverance and endurance.

In a certain town there was a merchant who came forward several times as a penitent, and then arose saying: "I'll pay it." Then he left the building, and when he returned he made this explanation: "Before I came to this community I failed in business, but here I have prospered largely; and while I was at the altar seeking peace with God I felt that it was my duty to pay my debts, and became convinced that

I could enjoy no peace until I had done so. And ever since I formed the resolution I have had the approval of my conscience and the abiding presence of my Saviour." Be sure that our holy religion demands a renunciation of all sin, and that it requires honesty, justice, truth, purity, virtue, and a loving and forgiving disposition.

Let me insist, then, that just one wrong thing may bar the way of the soul to pardon and peace. It was the "one thing" lacking that kept the rich young ruler from following Christ. The Master said to him: "One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved; for he had great possessions" (Mark 10:21, 22). Just one thing, it may be, separates you, my dear reader, from Christ to-day. Whatever that may be, thrust it away, I beg you, and yield to His appeal. Level the hills of indifference, prejudice, ignorance, infidelity, selfishness and immorality. Fill up the valleys of doubt, fear, despondency and unbelief. Make the crooked ways straight and the rough places smooth. In a word, "bring forth fruits meet for repentance," and Christ will come into your heart, and you shall see the salvation of God. Hear the Saviour when He says: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20).

Just one thing often keeps professors of religion from enjoying full fellowship with Christ. One sinful habit will break the link of union. A mere grudge against a neighbor;

too great sensitiveness in taking offense when perhaps no injury was intended; a spirit of rivalry and jealousy when others appear to outstrip us; a feeling of hatred or revenge for some act of injustice or unkindness—these and similar obstacles bar the way to Christ and rob us of peace and happiness. Let us implore God to aid us in putting away every hindrance, to cast every idol aside, so that from this hour we may enjoy the fullest communion and the sweetest fellowship with the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost!

CHAPTER III.

THE BEGINNING OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.— Hebrew 12: 1, 2.

IN illustrating the Christian life the apostle Paul frequently alludes to the games and races practised by the Greeks and Romans. So popular were these games with the Greeks that their introduction changed the method of reckoning time. As the games were celebrated every fifth year, time was divided into periods of five years called "Olympiads," from Olympia, the place where they were celebrated.

There are some striking points of resemblance between these races and the Christian life; but there is one point of marked difference to which I would first direct attention. In each of these races there could be only a few competitors, and only one of them could be victorious. But the Christian race is not thus limited, for all are invited to run, and each who runs may win a reward. True, there did seem to be a time in the history of the world when salvation was restricted to the Jews as the elect people of God; but this was only apparent, for really there never was a time when it might not be truly said, as Simon Peter affirmed in the house of the

centurion Cornelius: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34, 35). And now, with the full light of the gospel illuminating the world, we may confidently say with Paul: "The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30).

In the Grecian races it was customary to make most careful preparation. The contestants exercised and practiced, dieted themselves, refrained from everything that might render them effeminate and weak. Their limbs were oiled and rubbed to make them supple, and their dress was light that it might not impede their movements. The flowing robe, or "toga," that men usually wore was laid aside as the competitors came upon the stadium, and everything was done to secure the utmost agility and speed. So should the Christian racer make all needed preparation to run the race that is set before him.

In the previous chapter the preparatory steps were pointed out, and now let us consider the teachings of the passage before us. We are told to "lay aside every weight," or incumbrance—whatever is calculated to embarrass or hinder. These hindrances differ in different persons. It is not always open sin that keeps us away from Christ. Very often men are prevented from becoming Christians by things that are in themselves innocent and lawful. Here is one so thoroughly engrossed with business that he says: "I have no time to spare." Others are so occupied in providing for their families, in getting gain, in pursuing pleasure, or maybe

in studying, as to find no time to attend to their souls. But Christ says: "One thing is needful," valuable above all else. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). Let this take precedence of everything else. Subordinate all other pursuits to this supreme quest.

We are further told to lay aside "the sin which doth so easily beset us." It is generally conceded that every person has some weak point, some favorite sin to which he is most likely to yield. This, like the "weight" already spoken of, is a besetment that differs in different persons. One's disposition is to get angry and swear. Others are tempted to indulge in pride, in revengeful feelings, in covetousness, or lust, or intemperance. But whatever the besetting sin may be, it must be put away, even though it be as dear as the members of the body. Hear the solemn words of Jesus: "If thy hand or thy foot offend thee (cause thee to stumble), cut them off, and cast them from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee (cause thee to stumble), pluck it out, and cast it from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire" (Matt. 18:8, 9). This is nothing more than the old doctrine of repentance, which is more than mere sorrow for past sin. The very gist of it is the forsaking of all sin.

Having taken, then, these preparatory steps, we are ready to advance. The next step is very simple, but it is as essential as it is simple. It is this: Just start upon the Christian race. Everything must have a beginning. Nothing can be

accomplished without making a start. Every step is a step of faith. The race begins in faith, and it goes on in faith. We are "justified by faith;" we "walk by faith, not by sight;" we "live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us." Faith is like the letters of the alphabet running through all the words and sentences. It is the elementary school, as well as the high school, in the Christian life.

It would be of no avail for one to begin the Christian life, if he should fail to continue in it. The racer must run till he reaches the goal before he can lay hold of the prize. Eternal life is promised "to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality" (Romans 2:7). The message of the Risen Christ to the church at Smyrna was to the same effect: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). There must be no yielding to fears, or doubts, or temptations of any kind; no faltering or halting if the light is not shining in noontide splendor, or peace and joy are not flowing in a constant stream. Having once set his face Zionward, the racer must keep on his way; for "no man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). Let the racer lay this truth to heart, and adopt the language of Paul: "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13, 14).

Many and wonderful are the inducements offered us to seek Christ, and to follow Him through evil as well as good

report. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8). Its whole tendency is the betterment of mankind. True religion serves to promote even secular success, because it tends to make men prudent and industrious. It contributes to their physical and mental welfare, since it makes them righteous in purpose, temperate in habit, gentle in disposition, contented and happy. Above all, since it rescues man from sin and its consequences, and effects the redemption of both body and soul, it girds him with godlike strength and inspires him with heaven-born hope while fighting the battles of life. And what shall I say of the life to come, which also is promised to those who persevere in the path of godliness? It is described in the Scriptures as a life devoid of all evil, free from all sin—a life in which there are no fears or tears, no sorrow nor pain, no dishonor nor shame, no corruption nor death. There is in it no darkness, but light that never grows dim; no war, but eternal peace, joy, love and harmony in the presence of the Holy One; uninterrupted communion with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. John, the Apostle of Love, full of divine revelations, in speaking of the wonderful love of the Father, declares: "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). Paul and Isaiah, who penetrated with inspired minds into the depths of divine truth, unite in declaring: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. 2:9).

And Paul compares the present with the future in these impressive words: "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. 13:12).

Dear reader, if you have found Christ through a living faith, cling to Him with all your might, and strengthened by the Almighty Spirit renew your grasp every day and hour. But if you have never sought and obtained this "pearl of great price," go and sell all you have, and come and buy it. In the inspiring words of Moses, the leader of Israel, to Hobab, his father-in-law, I appeal to you: "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: Come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel" (Numbers 10:29).

CHAPTER IV.

CONVERSION, OR REGENERATION

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.—2 Corinthians 5:17.

WE come now to inquire particularly: What is Conversion, or Regeneration as the theologians call it?

In the third chapter of the Gospel according to John, our Saviour calls it the New Birth, being "born again," or "born from above," as the Greek word means. He thus makes it a fundamental doctrine of the Christian system. On another occasion He said: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3). In His conversation with Nicodemus He declared emphatically: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus, doubting and not understanding, asked: "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." By this we understand that the water introduces him into the earthly or visible kingdom, and the Spirit ushers him into the spiritual or invisible kingdom. Jesus further explains to the bewildered Pharisee: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the

Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:3-7). Note carefully that He does not say, Ye "may" or "can", nor even use that strong word "ought," but "must," indicating that the new birth is an absolute necessity. Not all the gainsaying of skeptical men can explain away or efface this positive requirement of Christ in order to entrance into His kingdom.

It becomes us, therefore, to study this subject very carefully, that we may not deceive ourselves, nor fall short of that without which no one can be saved. In the sentence at the head of this chapter the apostle Paul makes an illuminating comment upon this teaching of Christ, and gives us the characteristics of a regenerated soul. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

In the first place, then, let it be said, it is a Divine Work. It is divine in its origin and perfection. Jesus declared to the Jews in the synagogue at Capernaum: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44). It is the work of the Holy Spirit, by which we are brought from a state of nature into a state of grace, from sin unto holiness, from the dominion of Satan into the kingdom of God, from the yoke of bondage into the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. It is something done in us and for us, which we are wholly unable to do for ourselves. The apostle Paul says: "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh." To the Corinthians he says: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him" (1 Cor. 2:14). The fountain being corrupt, the stream must

continue corrupt. As the prophet Jeremiah puts it: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. 13:23). The apostle John declares: "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12, 13). That is to say, sonship to God comes to man not by inheritance or descent, nor by a man's own will or the will of another man, but by the power of God. And no power but that of God can effect this mighty change that renovates man's nature, and restores him to the high estate from which he has fallen, in the image of his Maker. It is a "new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

The foundation of this doctrine lies in the totally depraved and corrupt state into which man was brought by the fall. As his condition is immeasurably low and degraded by nature, so he is immeasurably exalted by divine grace. When he receives again through Christ the impress of the divine nature upon his heart, the restoration is as perfect as the fall was complete. Not more dissimilar is light from darkness, or life from death, than is the divinely regenerate soul from the morally distorted soul of the sinner. As God created the world out of nothing, so He effects this moral creation out of nothing; and the one is instantaneous and special as the other. The Almighty Spirit, with whom "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," knows no distinction of time, and leaves none of His works incomplete. Infinite Power is not tardy in its operations; God

speaks, and it is done. Those who make regeneration a progressive work confuse it with the process, or with the conditions in which God imparts salvation, and which when complied with make it fit for God to accomplish His work and grant the desired blessing. Or, perhaps, they confuse their knowledge of its possession with the thing possessed. The assurance of conversion may come gradually, but the work itself on the part of God is done in that instant when His requirements are complied with. One cannot be at the same moment partly a child of God and partly a child of the Devil. Jehovah will have no copartnership with Satan. It is either the one thing, or it is the other: "No man can serve two masters." The commandments and promises of God are wholly irreconcilable with the opposite view. It is written: "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." The very moment in which one calls upon the Lord aright, in sincerity and truth, trusting only in His mercy, the Heavenly Father will adopt him as His child.

In the second place, Regeneration is a Spiritual Change, not a physical one. No new faculty is imparted, either of mind or body. It is a change in the inner man, which controls the outer man. Matter works upon matter, spirit upon spirit. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." God is a Spirit; therefore, to be born of God is a spiritual birth.

Moreover, because it is a spiritual change it is mysterious and cannot be comprehended by the natural man. That which is material may be seen and handled, but that which is spiritual must be felt or experienced. Thus Paul says to

the Corinthians: "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:11). To the puzzled Nicodemus, asking how these things could be, our Lord acknowledged that regeneration is mysterious: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." But nothing is to be rejected merely because it is mysterious. There are mysteries everywhere, in every thing; in germination and generation, in mind and matter, in the natural as well as in the spiritual world. Mysteries are abundant in the heavens above, in the earth beneath, in the mineral kingdom, in vegetable life, and in all the animal creation. Who can understand these bodies of ours, so curiously wrought? Who is wise enough to solve the mystery that lies in a grain of wheat, and explain how it germinates and grows? Let no one, then, dispute the doctrine of the new birth because it cannot be fully comprehended and explained. Let it suffice us to know that it is essential to salvation, that it is our part to repent and believe, and to trust God to do His part as He has promised.

Regeneration as a spiritual change includes a change in the Will. The first step is to resolve to be a Christian by the help of God. The Holy Spirit is ever inclining men to form this resolution, drawing them by the mercies of God and urging them by His judgments. But while this resolution is an all-important step to be taken, yet it alone is not regeneration. It is simply reformation, and while essential it is not sufficient. Not only the will, but the affections

and desires are changed in the new birth. The heart is swept and garnished, furnished anew, and lit up as with the candle of the Lord. The man is under the impulse of new principles and motives. He has put away "anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of his mouth," and has put on "bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering" (Col. 3:8-12). So also there is a corresponding change in the spiritual tastes, or the objects of affection. The renewed one loves that which he once hated, and hates that which he once loved. He abhors sin, he loves righteousness. Having been formerly the servant of Satan, he is now the servant of God. In the old days God was not in all his thoughts, but now He reigns supreme within. Before the change took place, he was forgetful, neglectful, unmindful of his obligations to God; but now he is humble and grateful, delighting in the Master's service. Before, the world, the flesh and the Devil controlled his affections; but now Christ is preferred above his chief joy. He loves God's Word, His Church and His people. He is fond of prayer, and delights in the ordinances of God's house. He says with the Psalmist: "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart" (Psa. 40:8). He takes pleasure in the society of Christians, but loves not the companionship of the wicked. Profanity, blasphemy, lying, and all kinds of wickedness are held in utter abomination by him. His affection is set on things above, not on things upon earth.

But this is not all. Regeneration includes also a change in the object of one's trust. It means forsaking all else and cleaving to Christ as the only refuge and hope. Whereas

the man once trusted in himself, in his morality, good works, riches, or in something else; now he trusts in Christ alone as his Saviour. He adopts as his own the language of Paul: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). He is "in Christ," connected with Christ as the branch with the vine, every action deriving its merit from Christ the motive power. This change means that Christ is at once the motive and the end of every action. He is the center and the circumference, in whom all the radii find their limit.

Is it not fitting to call this change in the will, the affections, the tastes, the object of love, and the object of supreme trust, a complete, thorough, radical change, "a new creation"? "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). The old Adam is put off, and the second Adam is formed in the heart, "the hope of glory." Is it not a facing about, forsaking the old path, and taking a new path in the opposite direction? Is it not a reversion, the stream flowing in a course directly contrary to its former way? Is it not a transition from darkness to light, a renovation of the entire nature, a resurrection from the grave of moral death, a restoration to the image of God?

Now, the question for each of us to ask is this: Has this great and wonderful work been wrought in us? Have we been born of the Spirit, "created in Christ Jesus unto good works"? Have we put off "the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts," and have we been renewed in the spirit of our mind, putting "on the new man, which

after God is created in righteousness and true holiness?" (Eph. 4:22-24). Let us not be satisfied until we are fully assured that the kingdom of God has been established in our hearts, for without it there can be no entrance for us into the realms of glory.

While much that has been already said may serve as evidences of conversion, there are still other tests which will serve to confirm us in the persuasion that we are "in Christ" and have been truly born of God. Let us note some of these. This change is sure to manifest itself in the outward life. Conduct is a sure index of character. The renewed man will not voluntarily indulge in sin, for "who-soever is born of God doth not (habitually) commit sin" (1 John 3:9). Such a person will be endued with power to overcome temptation, to control his evil propensities, and to bring his whole life into subjection to the will of Christ. The love of the world will be restrained. What the apostle calls "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" will be overcome. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world," and "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." If we live in the Spirit and are led by Him, we have put away the works of the flesh, which the apostle says are "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like, of the which I tell you before (says Paul), as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21). This power to overcome besetting sins may be relied upon as particularly

strong evidence of regeneration. The tendency toward these indulgences is strong, and the natural man is ever disposed to gratify his appetites. If they are controlled, it must be by a higher Power. We may appeal to experience in attestation of this fact. Have we control over ourselves? If so, it is good evidence that we are children of God.

This change will be manifested not only negatively, but positively also. The fruit of the Spirit will develop as "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith (or fidelity), meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5: 22, 23). Jesus said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." He that is truly converted will bring forth fruit unto holiness. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (1 John 3: 10). The genuine convert will show his faith by his works, and especially will delight in mercy. If he sees his brother have need, he will not withhold his compassion from him, but will show by his deeds of helpfulness that he has the principles and affections of the regenerate nature.

So then, we may be sure that the man who hates wickedness, works righteousness, loves God and keeps His commandments, loves his fellow-men and delights in doing good, has in his own heart the most indisputable evidence that he has "passed from death unto life." But let no man deceive himself. "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not,

then we have confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:18-22). Be sure that no mere reformation, or outward form or ceremony, will avail anything of itself; for "neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation" (Gal. 6:15). "Ye must be born again," is the Master's positive word. Since a mistake here would be fatal, let us search our hearts diligently, and see whether this work of God has been wrought in us—whether old things have passed away, and all things have become new. And if we have experienced this blessed change, let us "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1). But if this change has not been effected in us, let us call upon God, bowing in humble prayer, imploring the help of the Holy Spirit, struggling for life, and pleading like David: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10).

CHAPTER V.

EVIDENCES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

*Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.—
Matthew 7:20.*

THE next question an inquirer would be likely to ask is: "How may I know that I am a Christian?" It is a very pertinent question, and accords exactly with the Scripture injunction: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves." Surely nothing can be more essential to our peace, comfort and happiness than the assurance that we are children of God, so as to be enabled to say: "We know that we have passed from death unto life" (1 John 3:14). What a privilege it is to be able to say as we lie down to rest at night: "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5:1).

Saving faith is reliance upon Christ and Him alone. It is the voluntary acceptance of Him as my Saviour, the Sacrifice for my sins. It is faith working by love and showing itself by obedience. It involves a complete surrender of the whole man, body, mind and soul. Not only does it require confession with the mouth, but it takes possession of the heart, renewing the affections and the will. Hence it is correct to say that a Christian in one who loves Christ, trusts in Him and keeps His commandments.

The apostle Paul in the tenth chapter of Romans gives a very graphic description of faith, a portion of which is here quoted before proceeding to examine in detail the tests of Scriptural faith. "The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above); or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:6-17).

Saving faith is preceded by some things, accompanied by some other things, and followed by still others. Some of these, of course, are present in all stages of its progress.

As the first antecedent of this faith let us name Conviction, which always goes before conversion. It is, however, not an essential part of conversion, for multitudes have been convicted of sin who have never realized conversion. No man calls in the doctor until he realizes that he is sick; and so no man will come to Christ for salvation until he realizes his lost and ruined condition. The more thoroughly he feels convicted, the more keenly will he feel the need of a Saviour and the readier he will be to seek Him. It is to be feared that the absence of deep conviction is the cause of the fact that there are so many mushroom converts and half-hearted Christians. Not realizing the exceeding sinfulness of sin in the sight of God, their religion soon becomes a mere empty profession. The fallow ground of the heart has not been deeply broken. Like Ephraim, of whom the prophet speaks, such a person is "a cake not turned," only half baked and not cooked through and through. He has not "found trouble and sorrow;" the "pains of hell" and the "sorrows of death" have not got hold upon him. He has not been pricked in the heart, so as to cry out in deepest anguish: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

Prayer may be named as the next antecedent; for when one is deeply convicted of sin he will begin to cry out for help. Indeed, prayer is one of the things that run through the entire Christian life, from its inception to its full consummation in the world to come. This is the experience and history of all who ever sought and found Christ. The record of Saul of Tarsus is that of every convicted and truly penitent sinner: "Behold, he prayeth!" Without asking there can be no receiving; without seeking, no finding; without

knocking, no admittance. In truth it may be said: No prayer, no Christian; little prayer, little Christian; much prayer, mighty Christian! The more pungent the conviction, the more pressing will be the appeal for mercy. The convicted one feels the lashings of conscience within, and hears the muttering thunders of Sinai without. He hears the curses of the broken Law: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3:10). "He that believeth not is condemned already." Such a soul, dreading the wrath of a sin-avenging God, who is "a consuming fire" to those who slight His grace, and appalled by the prospect of the "bottomless pit," "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," cries out with deepest contrition: "God, be merciful to me a sinner!"

Deep conviction and persistent prayer will be sure to bring sincere contrition; and so I name Repentance as the third distinct antecedent to saving faith. In agony of soul the convicted one will confess his sins. Shame and grief will fill his heart as he remembers his base ingratitude and forgetfulness of God, his failure to appreciate the blessings so bountifully bestowed upon him. Tears will fill his eyes, appetite will fail, mental and spiritual anguish will sieze upon him, as he meditates upon his rebellion against God, his utter disregard of God's laws and commandments, his pride and folly, and all his wanton sinfulness and contempt for God and His word. And so his sins will become hateful in his own eyes, as he sees that they are loathsome in the sight of the holy Saviour. Down deep in his soul he will adopt the language of David, and cry to God: "Against thee, thee

only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest" (Psalm 51:4). Earnestly will he plead with God for pardon for the sake of Christ. In his distress he will be crying: "What must I do to be saved?" "Have mercy upon me!" "Lord, save, or I perish!" Just here I would aid the reader in ascertaining his real condition, by asking, Have you been thus convicted of sin? Have you seen yourself as a wretched and miserable offender against the Divine law? Have you prayed for pardon? Oh, have you groaned and sighed for deliverance? Have you realized the "exceeding sinfulness of sin," and felt how helpless is your condition without Divine help? Do you deplore your transgressions and hate your sins to such an extent that you are resolved, by the assisting grace of God, to indulge in them no more? If you have never had such an experience, may the Holy Spirit help you at this very moment to realize your state!

Having discussed the antecedents of saving faith, I now proceed to consider its accompaniments. We have seen the poor sinner upon the verge of despair. He finds no comfort in his penitential tears and prayers. In himself there is no merit, and therefore no hope of relief. Thus far the Holy Spirit has led him on; will He now forsake him? By no means. He whispers to the sorrowing one the Saviour's invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." And those sweet words of the Psalmist: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee" (Psa. 55:22). As the penitent, in despair of

himself, listens to that voice, he begins to cast himself upon Jesus, saying: "Here, Lord, I give myself away—'tis all that I can do." Now an occasional gleam of hope flashes across his mind, a little peace of conscience ensues, and soon daylight begins to dawn upon his soul. The Spirit continues to ply the promises, and the penitent leans a little more firmly upon Christ, saying: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." As faith takes a stronger hold upon Jesus and His word, the seeker finds a change taking place in his perceptions, thoughts and feelings. He begins to love things that he once hated, and to hate that which he once loved. Supreme love takes possession of his heart, and he delights in God. His affections run out toward his fellow-men also. If he has sinned against them, he wants to repair the injury so far as possible. He yearns for the salvation of the unsaved. He desires to lead them to the same fountain of light and life and liberty that he has found. He feels a joyous hope of heaven. Thanksgiving and praise well up in his soul, and find expression from the lips. He is firmly resolved, by the Spirit's aid, to keep God's commandments and ordinances blameless to the end of his life.

Now, this is no imaginary picture, but one that is true to observation and experience, and in exact accord with the teachings of Scripture. Christ declared that He came to call sinners, not the righteous, to repentance. Praying, repenting and believing constitute the staple of the Word. Paul expounds the Christian experience when he makes such utterances as these: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteous-

ness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14: 17). "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith (fidelity), meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5: 22, 23). Repentance and its concomitants, then, are the antecedents of saving faith, while love, joy, peace, and other fruits of the Spirit are its attendants.

It is readily granted that all persons do not possess these marks in the same degree; but all must manifest some degree of repentance, must experience a love for God above all things else, and must enjoy a measure of peace as a consequence of being relieved from the guilt and condemnation of sin. Some persons are more easily depressed or elated than others, because they are of a different temperament. We have seen some so keenly convicted of sin that they cried out, as did those on the Day of Pentecost: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" On the other hand, we have seen some so full of love and gratitude, so elated with joy, that they could not refrain from shouting aloud the praises of God. Then again, we have seen some who were apparently unmoved, yet, like the deep river moving along in silent majesty, full of love, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost. Now let me ask: Have you ever experienced this peace of conscience, this joy of soul, this supreme delight in Christ? Has this been the glad language of your heart: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee"?

The consequents of saving faith now require consideration. In the first place, it produces inward changes. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5: 17). The

Christ motive has obtained control. The thoughts of his mind and the desires of his heart have been changed. Carnal affections have been subdued, and sin no longer has dominion. The springs of action are new. Love takes the place of malice, envy, revenge, and all such passions. The old man has been expelled, and the new Man has been formed in the heart the hope of glory. The renewed one has put on "bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness, meekness, long-suffering," forbearance, forgiveness and love. He has been "renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3: 10-14).

Moreover, these holy tempers and principles will produce the outward fruits of righteousness, conformity to the will of God, and obedience to His commandments. This consequence comes as naturally as the fruit comes from the tree. If our faith is fixed in Jesus, we shall be animated by the same spirit that moved Him. He was holy; so will we seek to be. He was obedient to His Father's will; so will we strive to be. He "went about doing good," and our steps will follow where He leads. No one could claim to be a faithful servant to a master whose commands he constantly disobeyed. Our Divine Master declared: "If a man love me, he will keep my words; . . . he that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings" (John 14: 23, 24). And the apostle John says: "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments" (1 John 2: 3).

This brings us to speak of practical Christianity as a test of faith. James, the writer of the Epistle, brings out this connection when he draws a distinction between a spurious and a genuine faith. He says: "What doth it profit, my

brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith (that is, such a faith) save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. . . . For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:14-26). Akin to this is the solemn declaration of Christ: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). And the utter futility of works without faith He implies in the words that follow: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:22, 23). As to reconciling the apparent lack of harmony between the teaching of Paul and that of James in connection with faith and works, I have never found any difficulty. Paul was laying emphasis upon the deadness of works without faith in Christ, and James was putting stress upon the deadness of any so-called faith that is not accompanied by good works. Faith and works have been likened to the two oars of a boat, as both oars must be used in order to progress. They are mutually dependent; faith bears fruit in good works, and the doing of helpful

deeds is a powerful stimulant of faith. "Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them," is the test that the Master Himself applies.

Let us, then, ask ourselves: Are we fruit-bearing Christians? Is ours a dead or a living faith? Do we love God and keep His commandments? Do we love our fellow-men, and do them good as we have opportunity? And our enemies—do we love them, seeking to bless those who revile us, doing good to them that hate us, praying for those who spitefully use us and persecute us? Are we patient in tribulation, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord? Are we feeding the hungry and clothing the naked? Do we love the souls of our fellow-men, so as to seek their salvation? Are we letting our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven?

Happy the man who can answer such questions as these affirmatively with a good conscience; for he who can do so gives indisputable evidence that he is a child of God and a faithful servant of Jesus Christ.

"O how happy are they,
Who their Saviour obey,
And have laid up their treasure above!
Tongue can never express
The sweet comfort and peace
Of a soul in its earliest love.

"That sweet comfort was mine,
When the favor divine
I first found in the blood of the Lamb;
When my heart first believed,
What a joy I received,
What a heaven in Jesus's name!

"Jesus all the day long
Was my joy and my song;
Oh, that all His salvation might see!
'He hath loved me,' I cried,
'He hath suffered and died,
To redeem a poor rebel like me.' "

CHAPTER VI.

WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT

*The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit,
that we are children of God.—Romans 8:16.*

IN addition to the marks and tests already noted, there is direct testimony to our adoption into the family of God, which is usually called the “witness of the Spirit.” Some persons affirm that the Holy Spirit bears witness only by means of the fruits produced in the believer’s life, and they denominate the direct witness—“Methodist doctrine.” But I propose to show, in the first place, that it is the doctrine of the Bible, and as such is necessary to our peace and happiness.

Our blessed Saviour before His triumphal departure from earth promised to send the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to guide His disciples “into all the truth,” and to teach them “all things.” Said He: “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14: 16, 17). “The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14: 26). “When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into

all truth; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16: 13, 14).

Of all the knowledge, of all the truth, of all the grace, of all the comfort which the Holy Spirit imparts, what can be so essential as the assurance of our acceptance with God the Father? Wherein could we find comfort, were we left to grope in darkness and dread, in doubt and fear concerning our eternal interests? How sad to be left without assurance of God's favor, conveyed by the direct witness of His Spirit within our hearts to our adoption into His heavenly family! What would it avail us for "the Lord to know them that are his," if we have no knowledge and no certain way of knowing that we are His children?

But let us proceed with the proof from the Scriptures. It is related in the Acts of the Apostles that, on the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended with so much power, and thousands were convicted and converted, Peter exhorted the people: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2: 38, 39). Notice carefully that this promise is made to all—"to you, to your children, to all that are afar off." This doctrine is abundantly taught and established in the Epistles, where it is spoken of as the witness, the seal, the earnest, the pledge, and in similar terms. St. John says: "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because

he hath given us of his Spirit" (1 John 4: 13). St. Paul declares: "He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. 1: 21, 22). "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory" (Ephes. 1: 13, 14). Again, he writes in Ephesians 4: 30: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." To the Galatians he says: "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4: 4-6). In the Epistle to the Romans Paul declares: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." And then follows that clear, unmistakable passage: "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8: 14-16). The person here witnessing is declared emphatically to be "the Spirit himself." His function is to give testimony, and the object of His testimony is to assure us that we are the children of God. What further proof do we need? Who will dare gainsay these positive declarations of Holy Writ?

But to this we add the experience of many of God's children, which confirms these inspired statements concern-

ing the immediate and direct witness of the Spirit. Without some measure of the Spirit, how can any one be, or say, or know that he is a Christian? Is it not written: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his"? (Rom. 8:9). And that the "Spirit of Christ" is the "Spirit of God," is manifest from the context, which reads: "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." And then follows the solemn assurance: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9). So that every Christian must possess in some degree the testimony of the Holy Spirit; and the greater the degree of it the stronger will be his assurance, or persuasion, that he is a child of God. For this cause some are enabled to affirm with perfect confidence and holy boldness, and to rejoice in the possession of that knowledge: "We know that our sins are forgiven, and that our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life."

Should any one say that he has never experienced this testimony of the Spirit, then it remains that either he deceives himself, or else he has never been truly converted. But even if he has never enjoyed this blessed experience, that fact would not invalidate our argument, because it would be only negative testimony, and would be rejected as worthless in any court of justice; while the positive testimony of so many reliable witnesses would establish the reality of the Spirit's witness. There are thousands, if not millions, in the Church who can confidently say that they know themselves to be Christians, because they feel the Spirit Himself bearing witness with their spirits that they are children of God.

Having thus ascertained the truth of this doctrine by searching the Scriptures and appealing to Christian experience, let us now inquire: What is this testimony of the Spirit, and how may it be recognized?

The first part of this question is difficult to answer; for, to quote the words of St. Paul: "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2: 11). Yet a satisfactory answer may be given, and I do not know that any one has ever set forth a clearer and more forcible definition than that of John Wesley, who says: "By the testimony of the Spirit I mean an inward impression upon the soul, whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me and given himself for me; that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God." He further says: "I do not mean hereby that the Spirit of God testifies this by any outward voice; no, nor always by an inward voice, although he may do this sometimes. Neither do I suppose that he always applies to the heart (though he often may) one or more texts of Scripture. But he so works upon the soul by his immediate influence, and by a strong inexplicable operation, that the stormy winds and troubled waves subside, and there is a sweet calm: the heart resting as in the arms of Jesus, and the sinner being clearly satisfied that God is reconciled, that all his iniquities are forgiven and his sins covered." To Mr. Wesley's explanation may be added that of another eminent divine: "The Spirit of adoption doth not only excite us to call upon God as our Father, but it doth ascertain and assure us that we are the

children of God. And this it doth not by an outward voice, as God the Father to Jesus Christ, or by an angel, as to Daniel or the virgin Mary, but by an inward and secret suggestion, whereby he raiseth our hearts to this persuasion, that God is our Father and we are His children. This is not the testimony of the graces and operations of the Spirit, but of the Spirit himself."

Such is the explanation given by these learned, pious and competent men, to whose testimony might be added that of others no less eminent and worthy. But, after all that may be said concerning the "witness of the Spirit," whether it comes by an "inward impression," or a "secret suggestion or persuasion," or by an "inward or outward voice," or otherwise, one thing we know—that there is such an operation of the Spirit upon the heart, whether we can understand it or not. As to the manner in which the Spirit operates, we cannot fully explain; for Christ in His conversation with Nicodemus declared: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). It is indeed an inexplicable operation.

Turning now to the second part of the question, let us ask: How may we recognize this witness? Primarily it is not obtained from reason or books, not even the Bible itself; nor does it come through any human instrumentality. It is a matter of pure consciousness. I feel, I know, I perceive for myself, not for another; and no man can explain or simplify this ultimate conception of the mind. Said a pious old Christian woman to an infidel: "I am not educated, and

cannot argue like you; but some things I know. I know that honey is honey, because of the sweet taste it leaves in my mouth; so I know that the Bible is God's book by the taste it leaves in my heart." Thus we recognize the Spirit's work. We know, we feel, we are conscious of the fact that "the Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God."

In a secondary sense we recognize the Spirit's work by means of His fruits, as set forth in the previous chapter. But let no one be satisfied without this sublime testimony to his adoption into the family of God. Jesus tells us how it may be obtained: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him" (Luke 11:13). Let us ask and seek with all our hearts to have that gift bestowed upon us—that He may come in and abide with us in a holy and joyous fellowship. It was while the apostles and their companions were continuing in prayer on the Day of Pentecost that the Spirit was manifested in such wonderful power in their midst. In like manner let us continue to pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

"Come, Holy Ghost, all quickening fire,
Come, and my hallowed heart inspire,
Sprinkled with th' atoning blood;
Now to my soul Thyself reveal,
Thy mighty working let me feel,
And know that I am born of God."

CHAPTER VII.

GROWTH IN GRACE

*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord
and Saviour Jesus Christ.—2 Peter 3:18.*

THE Christian life is progressive. It means going on, growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Hence, the apostle Peter exhorts: "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:5-8). These words set forth the progressive steps in the Christian life, and constitute a fuller development of the command to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. They vividly remind one of a building beginning at the foundation and going to the top, or a flight of stairs rising from the lowest to the highest step.

Note carefully that the Foundation is Faith. It is the first step, the beginning of the Christian life. There can be no progress in building until the foundation has been laid. There must be faith in God's character, word, promises, and in His truth generally; for "without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he

is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). But particularly, there must be faith in Christ, the Son of God, the Sacrifice for sin. And this is not a mere assent of the mind to the truth, but it is embracing Him in the heart; "for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10). It is believing on Jesus, reliance upon Him as a personal Saviour. Faith is made the fundamental, indispensable condition of salvation, and hence it is written: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;" and "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." When the Jews asked Jesus: "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:28, 29). He meant that faith is the foremost thing. Let every sinner remember that this is the first thing to do, and let all who profess to be Christians examine themselves and see whether they have taken this first step or not. Be assured that the foundation must be laid before the building can proceed, that the seed must be planted before there can be a harvest expected.

Having, therefore, laid faith as the foundation, "add to your faith virtue," that is fortitude, moral principle, courage, which was the original meaning. All commentators agree in this interpretation of the term. The apostle means to say: Add to your faith courage, that you may hold fast your profession, that you may grapple successfully with the cares, trials, afflictions, temptations and persecutions of life, and in all these experiences to be "stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Oh, how great is the

need of moral courage to acknowledge Christ at all times, to face difficulties, to overcome the world and withstand the enemies of our souls! The old Christian needs it to help him bear with patience and equanimity the afflictions and infirmities of advancing age. The young Christian needs it in order to subdue and govern himself. The young man needs it when enticed of his own lust, and when the wicked seek to lead him astray. It requires a large supply of moral courage to control pride, passion and pleasure, and to refuse invitations to drink the inebriating cup, to take part in unlawful games and in such like evil practices. The young woman needs it also, that she may resist the numerous enticements to sin, such as undue devotion to dress, fondness for show and admiration, the temptations that infest fashionable society, and especially the enticements of ball-room, card-party, wine-suppers, and similar things. Fathers and mothers greatly need this virtue, or moral courage, that they may rule themselves and their households well, and bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. All of every age, profession and vocation need moral courage to do right and resist evil always and everywhere. Let virtue be joined to faith!

"And to virtue knowledge," is the apostolic exhortation. Let moral courage be associated with mental enlightenment. This step is essential, for we need to widen our views of God as revealed in His Word, and to be familiar with the life and character of Christ. The progressive man is seeking to know more every day. Knowledge of all kinds enters into one's equipment for useful and efficient service. Without a certain amount of knowledge, faith would be blind. But

it must be blended with wisdom, which gives knowledge its true application, that our faith may be strengthened, and our courage properly directed and kept from degenerating into rashness. What is needed is not that sort of knowledge which "puffeth up," but that which will make us humble and childlike in disposition, "wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Solomon knew the secret of power and evinced his appreciation of it, when he asked God to give him wisdom and knowledge in preference to all things else. The apostle well says: "Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men" (1 Cor. 14:20). And the wise man speaks truly when he says: "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things that thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her" (Prov. 3:13-15).

"And to knowledge temperance," says Peter. This means self-control, moderation, temperance in all things—in our labors, pleasures, recreations; in our thoughts, words, actions—and is not restricted to eating and drinking. In these days when mention is made of temperance or intemperance, most persons interpret it to refer only to the use of intoxicating drinks, because these are prolific of so many evils. But temperance has a much wider meaning as used in the Word of God. It includes the keeping of body, mind and soul in subjection to the law of God. Our heavenly Father has given us the good things of the world for use within certain limits. Whoever abuses them or uses them excessively,

not only violates God's law as laid down in the Bible, but also the law as written in his own nature, and he must inevitably reap the consequences. Mind is meant to control matter, and reason to rule passion, and the earthly should ever be kept in subordination to the heavenly. Paul exhorted the Philippians: "Let your moderation be known unto all men."

Moderation is the golden mean between extremes. It avoids excess, neither overdoing nor underdoing. As one writer says: "It means meekness under provocation, readiness to forgive injuries, equity in the management of business, candor in judging of the character and actions of others, sweetness of disposition, and the entire government of the passions" (McKnight). The Delphic oracle gave prominence in the temple to the inscription: "Avoid excess." The law of temperance exacts that we shall be moderate in lawful things; moderate in doing right things, and excluding wrong things altogether. Nowhere does the Word of God allow moderation in committing sin. Everywhere woe is denounced against evil-doing. The positive commands, "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not", pealed forth from Mount Sinai amid lightnings and thunders, to impress their solemnity and importance upon the children of men.

Moreover, temperance requires us to avoid doubtful things. Hence the apostle says: "Abstain from all appearance (or, every form) of evil." "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient." "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (Rom. 14: 21). We should therefore jealously avoid whatever has a tendency

to injure ourselves or our neighbor. For example, the drinking of wine as a beverage is not only a thing of doubtful propriety because it may mislead others, but it is also fraught with danger to him who indulges in it. "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder" (Prov. 23: 31, 32). The growing Christian will endeavor, like Paul, to keep his body in subjection, knowing that excessive indulgence of his appetites will impair the health and mar the happiness and ultimately ruin the soul. He who allows anger to control him is just as culpable as the man who eats or drinks to excess. This is true also of those who are intemperate in speech, because such persons sow dissension, destroy the peace and harmony of families, and break up the community into discordant factions. Christian self-restraint involves much care and sometimes painful experiences; but it should be remembered that the Saviour directs: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. . . . And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell" (Matt. 5: 29, 30).

The apostle goes on to say that to temperance must be added "patience." The root idea of this word is "suffering," and it indicates the ability or disposition to suffer quietly and with even mind whatever evils may come. It is calm endurance, but is not apathy or insensibility to suffering. It includes also the idea of continuance and perseverance. It requires faith to undertake, courage to do, knowledge to

guide, temperance to control, patience to endure and persevere. This grace of patience is indispensable to the exercise of the fruits of the Spirit—"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, self-control," which constitute the staple products of Christ's holy religion. We need patience to enable us to endure persecution, for "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). We need it when men speak evil of us, or do us other injuries, to keep us from indulging revengeful tempers and words; so that when reviled we may not revile again, but may cultivate the grace of forgiveness. We need it to keep us from becoming sour and restless, murmuring and complaining; to prevent us from growing weary and despondent, and to enable us to persevere in well-doing. We need it especially in time of sickness and pain, whenever the hand of affliction lies heavy upon us. Patience is one of faith's strong allies, and is an evidence of completed character. Thus it is written in the Epistle of James: "The trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (James 1:2-4). "Take the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:10, 11).

"And to patience godliness," continues the apostle. Godliness, as here set forth, may be defined as piety toward God, consisting of reverence, adoration and love to Him as God;

admiring and adoring His immaculate, immutable character, perfections and attributes; loving Him supremely, cheerfully obeying His laws and submitting to His will. The English word means "God-likeness," and while being "profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," yet it is eminently unselfish and disinterested in its motive. It produces repentance, because sin is against God, and not simply because it brings punishment. It loves God, not merely for what He is to us, but for what He is in Himself, for His innate excellence, the purity of His character and the glory of His name. It is unalloyed love, akin to the feeling of a little child that admires the sun because of its brightness and beauty, without knowledge of the benefits that it brings to the world. It exults in God as its supreme delight. He who thus contemplates the Divine character longs to be conformed to it, so that his life may be as a mirror reflecting the glorious image of the Lord. May the Spirit of God so move upon the hearts of both writer and reader, that they may glow with the radiance of genuine godliness, that others may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven!

Godliness is to have added to it "brotherly kindness," says the apostle. This is love to the brethren, and reminds us that the sum of all true religion is love to God and man. Jesus said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22: 37-40).

But it is natural to feel a peculiar affection for those who are associated with us in mind and heart, working for a common cause, battling against a common foe, journeying to the same heavenly country, and seeking a similar prize. An apostle tells us to "do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." This brotherly kindness is directed specially to the children of God because they are His children. It matters not how poor or ignorant, or what may be their race, color, or social standing; if they are children of God they are our brethren, and as such are entitled to brotherly kindness at our hands, and may justly claim our sympathy, affection and help. It is our duty as well as privilege to rejoice with them in their rejoicings, to sympathize with them in their sorrows, to relieve their necessities according to our ability, and thus fulfill the Scriptural injunction: "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." There are many little offices of kindness that we may do, which will promote the happiness of others and at the same time prove the sincerity of our love. If we love as brethren, we will "be pitiful, be courteous," as Peter admonishes. In similar vein Paul exhorts: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another" (Rom. 12: 10). And the Master Himself declared: "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matt. 10: 42). May this brotherly kindness be in us and abound more and more, so that we may prove ourselves to be true children of our Heavenly Father, and

genuine disciples of the Son of God, who said: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

The apostle now progresses to a climax when he says: "And to brotherly kindness charity." Brotherly kindness is limited to a certain class, but charity or love is unlimited, embracing not only the brethren but all mankind. It is the trait of character so wonderfully described in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, and declared to be absolutely essential to the Christian life. It implies charity in the feelings and thoughts as well as in the words and deeds. It requires love to one's enemies as well as his friends, prompting us to bless them that curse us, to do good to them that hate us, and to pray for those who spitefully use us and persecute us. It calls upon us to put the best construction possible upon the motives and actions of others, spurning that evil maxim which teaches that every man should be regarded as a rogue until he proves himself honest. Real charity takes no pleasure in exhibiting the faults of others, but its joy is to "cover a multitude of sins." In the immortal words of Paul: "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Cor. 13:4-7). Oh, how different would be the condition of things both in the Church and in the world, if God's children possessed more fully this heavenly disposition! How smoothly would the machinery of human affairs run, with the friction re-

moved under the influence of Christian charity! How individual character would be built up, the work of the Lord prosper, and the whole world uplifted and blessed!

Let us, then, go on adding to the other graces this queen of them all—that which is greater than all miraculous gifts, as Paul declares, and which is even greater than faith and hope. His solemn declaration is this: “Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.” Love is Christlike, Godlike; for it is written in the words of the Beloved Disciple: “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:16). It is the crowning grace in the Christian character, the enduring element in the kingdom of God, the golden chain that binds the hearts of heaven’s inhabitants together in a happy, harmonious and holy band. If faith is the cornerstone, love is the capstone that completes and adorns the spiritual building; if faith leads the van, love brings up the rear; if faith is the seed, love is the “full corn in the ear.” How sublimely beautiful the progression—the germ, the tender shoot, the stalk, the grain that crowns it all! Abounding in love, the Christian becomes complete in Christ. No one can be a Christian without having some measure of these graces, but they may be possessed in a larger or smaller degree. The more of them in his life, the better Christian one is sure to be.

In view of what has been said upon this vital subject, let me now ask the reader: Have you taken these steps in the divine life? Are you abounding in these graces more and more—growing “in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”? Let each one compare the present with

the past and settle these questions for himself. No one else can do it for you. Progress is a test of the genuineness of your conversion. It is also a test of the vitality of your faith in Christ, as well as a constant safeguard against backsliding. There are "exceeding great and precious promises" to stimulate your progress. Inspired by these promises of a faithful Father, and using all diligence, may you "add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity (love). For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fail. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are established in the present truth" (2 Peter 1: 5-12).

CHAPTER VIII.

CONDITIONS OF GROWTH

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—2 Peter 3:18.

TO grow means to increase in size and strength, to develop, to make progress. Grace means favor, acceptance, conformity. Therefore, to grow in the grace of Christ is to increase in favor with Him and in conformity to His will and character. To grow in the knowledge of Christ is to know more and more of Him and His word.

Many persons seem entirely satisfied in making a profession of religion and uniting with the church. They act as if the work were wholly done, whereas it is just begun. They seem content to remain mere babes in Christ. But duty commands us to advance, and safety depends upon going forward. Hence, the apostle Peter prefaces his exhortation to grow in grace with the caution: "Beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." It is a matter of grave doubt, whether one can retain the favor of God for any length of time if he is making no progress. If such a thing can continue, it is a spiritual anomaly, that finds no parallel in the material world. The tree or plant that does not grow begins to decline and finally dies. The new-born babe that does not grow soon sickens and dies. Like all other forms of life, the Chris-

tian life produces growth, and its very essence lies in development. Now, there are certain conditions which must be complied with, in order to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. Let us point them out.

First of all, there must be Life. This is the foundation. The highest principle that can be imparted to matter is life, and without it there can be no growth. Inanimate objects do not grow. Houses, chairs, rocks, and all other things belonging to the mineral kingdom, are devoid of power to grow, for the reason that they are without the life principle. So it is with whatever has been alive once, but has lost the vital principle; it cannot grow unless it be quickened again. The germ must be alive in the seed, or it can never sprout and bring forth fruit. Along the roadside we behold an old tree, whose large trunk and limbs tell of the glory and strength which it once possessed, but now it is dead. Spring opens, but we see no sign of budding foliage nor growing fruit. After awhile we pass that way again, and note that, while other trees are dressed in luxuriant foliage, or loaded with luscious fruit, this tree remains the same barren, unsightly object. It has received the sunshine, the dew and the rain, as the others received them, but all in vain; there is no invigorating sap flowing through its branches. It is dead, and no power in nature or art can awaken in it a thrill of life, and clothe it with foliage and fruit.

So it is with the human soul; spiritual life must be imparted to it, or else there can be no growth in the grace and knowledge of Christ. Hence, the Master so strenuously insists: "Ye must be born again." "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter

into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3). This conversion cannot be emphasized too strongly, for it is fundamental. We dare not teach a form of Christianity which does not begin in regeneration, by which the Holy Spirit imparts new life to the soul, evoking that faith which leads the new-born soul to look up to God and cry, "Abba, Father!" The reason why so many persons do not grow in grace is that they have not been truly converted, or else have lost the spiritual life which once they possessed. Like the dead tree, they cannot grow, because the principle of divine life is not in them. Settle, then, this question: Have I been truly converted? Has the "old man" of sin been crucified, and has the "new man" of righteousness been formed in my heart—Christ in me, "the hope of glory"? Have I seen myself as a sinner, repented heartily, and cast myself upon the mercy of God in Christ? Have I been received into favor with God through faith in the atoning Christ? Be assured that this precedes every other condition, and that all else will fail without it.

Another condition of growth is a healthful Atmosphere. In the autumn and winter, when the atmosphere is cold, trees and plants do not grow, their progress being arrested by frost and ice. Verdure and fragrance cannot continue in so chilly an atmosphere. So is it with a Christian; he cannot grow in grace in the midst of unwholesome surroundings. The Christian's atmosphere is the business he follows, the company he keeps, the books and papers he reads, the amusements in which he indulges. Upon the nature of these his spiritual condition largely depends. If you place a fly or a frog under a receiver, and exhaust the oxygen from the air, the creature will gasp and cease to breathe. Now, just as oxygen is es-

sential to animal life, so is spirituality to soul life. Not more surely will animal life cease without oxygen than will spiritual life without a spiritual atmosphere. Let a Christian habitually live in the carnal, impure atmosphere created by worldly-minded companions, and by books, papers, pictures, songs and amusements of impure tendency, and his spiritual growth will inevitably decline until it ceases to exist. Let us ponder these solemn words of Holy Writ: "To be carnally minded is death." "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Be careful, then, of the company you keep, the books and papers you read, and the amusements you indulge. The trashy literature that so many of our young people are reading involves not only the wasting of many precious hours that might be far better employed, but the instilling of deadly poison into their minds and hearts. A similar thing is true of many of the popular amusements of the age, such as card-playing and dancing, which serve to render those who practice them frivolous and forgetful of God. It is necessary to spiritual growth that we shun not only that which is absolutely vicious, but also whatever is of questionable propriety. To grow steadily and constantly we must avoid every form of evil, and keep in close touch with Christ. Constant communion with Him will surround us with an atmosphere through which none of the many influences that threaten our purity and usefulness can penetrate. As the man at the bottom of the sea in a diving-bell is dry and breathes pure air from the heavens above, so we may be "hid with Christ in God" and escape the baleful influences of the wicked world about us. Let every one who would grow in grace and in

the knowledge of Christ cultivate His fellowship and the society of good men and women, avoiding all that which is impure in the world around, and thus fulfill one of the most important conditions of spiritual growth and progress.

A third condition of growth is Light. Take two plants, and expose one to the light while the other remains in darkness, and mark the result. With equal advantages in other respects, the one in the dark will grow pale and sickly and finally die, while the other will flourish with increasing strength and beauty. Light is essential also to animal health and growth. When hospitals and sanitariums are built in these days, provision is made for an ample supply of sunshine because of its healing and strengthening influence. Likewise in the spiritual realm the Christian must have light, or else his growth cannot be steady and healthful. Jesus Christ declared Himself to be "the light of the world," and the apostle John says that this was "the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:8). He has given us His Spirit to enlighten our pathway, and has bestowed upon us His Word, the entrance of which giveth light. If we dwell in God through Christ, the Spirit and the Word will teach us wisdom, comfort our hearts, and will open the eyes of our souls to behold wondrous things out of His law.

It is necessary, then, to remove everything that obstructs this divine light, and to do all we can to promote its shining. The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto

every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16, 17, A. R. V.). A thoughtful writer has said: "There is a sacred light in the word; but there is a covering and veil on the eyes of men, so that they cannot behold it right. The removal of this veil is the peculiar work of the Holy Spirit." But the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God, and the daily, careful, prayerful reading and searching of the Scriptures will assuredly result in a growing, thrifty Christian life. How true are the words of the Psalmist: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psa. 119:105). We cannot esteem too highly the word of God, the great manual of truth and knowledge, the source of light, showing the way to glory, honor and immortality. We should meditate in it day and night, and delight in it; for "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward" (Psa. 19:7-11). As Christ is the Light of the world, trust in Him, and bask in the rays of His holy example and teaching. Draw your meditations from the divine word, and you will dwell in a circle of light and warmth congenial to your growth in grace. This holy light will irradiate the pathway of life, illuminate the darkness of the grave, and lead you at last to the city that hath no need of the sun nor of the moon

to shine in it, for "the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

Still another condition of growth is Exercise, or cultivation. One may have life, his atmosphere or environment may be favorable, and light may be abundant, but if exercise is neglected he will be deficient in growth. Talents are not to be buried, but diligently used. The servant to whom one pound was committed did not waste his master's money, yet he hid it away without improvement. The result was that it was taken from him, and his lord denounced him as a "wicked and slothful servant." Illustrations in the natural world are abundant. Note the contrast between cultivated fields and those that are uncultivated; where hoe and plow have been used the plants are thrifty and the grain full and healthy, but where cultivation has been neglected the weeds are abundant and the plants yellow, sickly and ready to perish. See the difference between the diligent student and his fellow who is careless and indolent; the one wins honors, while the other reaps failure. Observe how the human body develops muscle and strength by exercise, while lack of exercise entails weakness and ill-health. A similar contrast prevails in the spiritual world; proper exercise is essential to health and growth, while spiritual inactivity is sure to bring weakness and disease of soul.

The exercise essential to spiritual growth includes such things as these: prayer in private, in the family circle, in social worship; self-examination, meditation; devout study of the Scriptures; reading of other good and wholesome books; fasting or abstinence; doing good to the souls and bodies of men in every available way; attending upon the

ordinances of God's house, such as public worship, the ministry of the word, and the Supper of the Lord. Several of these forms of exercise have been discussed in previous chapters, and it is now in order to lay special emphasis upon the necessity and benefits of prayer, especially secret prayer, and of earnest work, in the development of the Christian life.

The importance of prayer cannot be overstated. It is God's own appointed method and is universal in its application. It recognizes our weakness and appeals to the right source for strength. He who would grow and become strong must dwell much in the closet of secret devotion, for this is his chiefest, dearest sanctuary. Private prayer is the secret of power with God. Says the Psalmist: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Psa. 91:1). And Jesus told His disciples: "When thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee" (Matt. 6. 6, Am. Rev. Ver.). The Bible abounds with illustrations of the power and efficacy of prayer. Some writer makes this graphic collection of prayers answered: "Abraham's servant prays, and Rebekah appears; Jacob prays, and the angel is conquered; he prays again, and Esau's revenge is changed to fraternal love; Joseph prays, and he is delivered from the prison of Egypt; Moses prays, and Amelek is discomfited while Israel triumphs; Joshua prays, the sun stands still and victory is gained; Hannah prays, and the prophet Samuel is born; David prays, and Ahithophel goes out and hangs himself; Asa prays, and Israel gains a glorious victory; Jehoshaphat

prays, and God turns away his anger and smiles; Elijah prays, and the little cloud appears and rain descends upon the earth; Elisha prays, and the waters of the Jordan are divided; he prays again, and a child is restored to life; Isaiah prays, and one hundred and eighty-four thousand Assyrians are dead; Hezekiah prays, and the sun dial is turned back and his life is prolonged; Mordecai prays, and Haman is hanged and Israel is free; Nehemiah prays, and the king's heart is softened; Ezra prays, and the walls of Jerusalem begin to rise; the publican prays, and goes down to his house justified; the Church prays, and the Holy Ghost is poured out; it prays again, and Peter is delivered by an angel; Saul prays, and Ananias is sent to open his eyes; Cornelius prays, and Peter is directed to his house to instruct him concerning the kingdom of Christ. Paul and Silas pray, and the prison shakes, the doors fly open, and every man's bands are loosed." To these examples let me add that of Christ, who in the days of His flesh spent whole nights in secret prayer. Surely here are strong inducements to the practice of secret prayer.

Let no one plead lack of time or convenient place. Jesus had Olivet, Gethsemane, and other quiet spots to which he retired for communion with His Father. So may we find a secluded spot beneath some shady tree, in some quiet valley, on some hill, or in some "inner chamber." Let me here record an incident in my own experience, which occurred during the Civil War, just after the seven days' fight around Richmond. One bright Sabbath morning after the duties of the camp were over, feeling unusually calm, I looked around for a secluded spot to which I might go and lift up my heart in grateful homage and praise to God. Just

across the railroad from me there was a wooded hill and toward this I made my way, conversing with my Maker as I went. I remember well how the tears of penitence and gratitude trickled down my cheeks as I ascended the winding pathway up the hill. But when I reached the top and entered the opening beyond, a horrid sight arrested my vision. I seemed to be in the graveyard of the world. Startled and appalled I viewed the city of the dead. Here was a half-filled grave; over there an uncovered and shattered coffin. Here by hundreds lay the unburied dead. At first I saw no living man, but soon here came the ambulance freighted with the cargo of death. No careful pall-bearers conveyed the dead soldier to his grave. The driver slid out his freight on a board, and then hurried off for another load. The soldiers were dying so fast from wounds and disease that it was impossible to bury them. The place I viewed was Oakwood cemetery, where sixteen thousand Confederate soldiers found their last earthly home. I did not tarry long on the spot, and returning I thought that this might soon be my condition—that my body might soon be stretched upon the field of battle as food for vultures and worms. But I resolved to do my duty, let come whatever the future might bring. Now, to what shall I attribute my calmness, self-possession and courage in that trying hour? Not to any innate power of my own; no, far from it. I ascribe it to the God in whom I trusted and upon whom I had been calling in secret prayer. And to this day I love to repair to the forest and talk with my Lord alone. I love to feel the tears of penitence and gratitude moistening my cheeks as I commune with Him in the silent hours of the night. I

love at early morn to offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and to plead the precious promises of His word, and as I mourn over my sinfulness and unworthiness to think of Him as saying: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," and "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." At evening time, as the gifted poetess wrote:

"I love to steal awhile away
From every cumbering care,
And spend the hours of setting day
In humble, grateful prayer."

Such communion with God is a sweet repast to the soul, a feast that the world knows not of. He who neglects the secret place of prayer denies himself of a precious privilege and impoverishes his soul. Some one has pithily said: "Praying will make you leave off sinning, or sinning will make you leave off praying." It may be truly said: "No prayer, no Christian; little prayer, little Christian; much prayer, mighty Christian." As not to pray at all argues no religion at all, so to pray but seldom indicates a low state of piety.

To the neglect of secret prayer may be attributed much of the coldness, lukewarmness and backsliding in the church. I appeal to the experience of church members: As long as you prayed faithfully and diligently, did you not enjoy religion? If the enemy of your soul triumphed over you at any time, had you not previously neglected the secret place of devotion? This has been my experience. From the neglect of prayer the soul becomes dwarfed, the spirit dull,

duty an irksome task, the Sabbath the most lonesome of all the days, the society of Christians shunned, the prayer-meeting avoided, the Bible the driest of all books, all sermons poor and uninteresting, the church forsaken—in fine, everything about religion becomes cold as an iceberg and lifeless as a stone.

On the other hand, prayer in secret puts interest into religion and promotes happiness and progress in the Christian life. As we pray the heart becomes mellow like the fallowed earth, ready to receive the seeds of truth; the feelings become tender and the will submissive to the will of God; the soul is unburdened, and like a swift-winged bird soars in devout contemplation beyond earthly things to enjoy the anticipated glories of heaven. Prayer helps to dispel fear and doubt, cures loneliness and melancholy, supplies an antidote for discontent and the spirit of complaint. It is a light in the midst of darkness, and it calms the soul in the midst of storm. It is also a sure index of sincerity. Once while passing through a forest, my attention was arrested by sighs and groans, and as I listened and looked I presently discovered a man upon his knees with his face in the dust. As I passed along without disturbing him, I thought that this man must be sincerely in earnest, hungering and thirsting after righteousness. I could think of no other motive to prompt him in assuming that posture, but to confess his sins, receive pardon and salvation, and praise God for His goodness. So it is natural to conclude that those who habitually engage in secret prayer can have no other end to subserve than the glory of God and the salvation of their own souls and those of others. One may attend church and pray fluently before

the public, and yet be a hypocrite at heart; he may pray at the family altar for the sake of appearance, or merely to set an example. But the man who goes into the secret place of prayer away from the eyes of the world, away from his nearest friends, and there communes with God, gives token that he is sincere and in earnest. Oh, for the holy habit of secret prayer in the lives of all who profess to be God's children! By this means the Church would be clothed with invincible power, and prosperity would abide in all her palaces.

But prayer alone is not enough; work must be combined with it. We must use and improve all our talents. Not only did the prayers of the centurion Cornelius come for a memorial before God, but his alms presented themselves also in the divine presence. Paying and praying go together. Our time must be actively employed in doing and getting good. Idleness is the foe of progress in any department of life, and especially in the Christian life. Says a wise observer of old: "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw and considered it well; I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man" (Prov. 24:30-34). What brings more poverty and want than even war entails? Idleness brings poverty of purse, poverty of mind, poverty of soul. When God made man He "put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." And after

his expulsion from Eden on account of sin, this was the divine decree: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." In one of our Lord's parables, he represents a certain man as commanding his two sons: "Go work today in my vineyard," and this is what our Father in heaven says to each of His children. In another parable a householder is told of, who kept going to the market-place for laborers to work in his vineyard, and asking the question of the unemployed: "Why stand ye all the day idle?" This also is a question from God to the idlers of today. Paul exhorts his brethren in Rome to be "not slothful in business," but to be "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, . . . distributing to the necessity of saints, given to hospitality" (Rom. 12:11, 13). Not only does diligent work in the vineyard of the Lord bring blessings to those in whose behalf we labor, but it exercises a strong influence over the worker's own character and life. As exercise develops bodily strength and promotes efficiency, so spiritual exercise in working the works of God whets the soul's appetite, creates a hunger and thirst after righteousness, and fits mind and heart for still better work.

It is vain to expect to grow in grace without using the requisite means. The laws of cause and effect are just as sure and strong in the spiritual as in the material world. When good seed are planted, and climate and atmosphere suit, if the plants are well watered and cultivated there will be a rich yield of fruit. And so from the tiny seed planted in the soul at the time of conversion, if the weeds are kept down, the sunshine and the rains come, and proper cultivation is bestowed, there will grow up a happy, useful Christian,

bearing the fruits of the Spirit to the Master's glory. Such was the experience of Paul the apostle, his spiritual life developing from the time of his conversion at Damascus until the very last years of his checkered career, when in prison at Rome he summed up his past, his present and his future in the declaration: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4: 6-8).

If we would join with the great apostle in this rich review of the past and this rapturous expectation of future glory, we must live for it, pray for it, work for it, making sure progress every day in holiness. God tells us to go forward, doing His will and performing our appointed work. Faith without works is as dead to-day as it was in the days of the apostles. In the final Day the divine procedure will be after this manner: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me

in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25:31-46).

In view of these solemn words of our Lord, let us consider well whether the germ of spiritual life has been imparted to us. If we find it in our hearts, let us so deal with it that it may develop and grow to its full fruition in the life to come. Let not the precious germ perish in the darkness of spiritual sloth, nor suffocate amid worldly influences and companions. Let the genial light of heaven beam upon it and nourish the tender plant. Let it increase

in size and strength, in verdure and beauty. Pray for light to see your spiritual condition, and grace to live up to the light you already have. Ponder the Holy Scriptures prayerfully, turn away from all that might hinder your progress, be faithful in little things as well as in those that are great. Be not weary in well doing, learn to labor and to wait, and copious showers of divine grace will surely descend upon you. And after the toil and the waiting, you shall be ushered into the world of glory, and shine forever in the kingdom of your Lord. Oh, that I might be instrumental in placing in your heart at least one seed of truth, that would spring up into everlasting life and bring forth much fruit to the glory of God! Remember that in the spiritual world as in the natural world it is true that "he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." And let it never be forgotten that, as Paul declares: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap: for he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7, 8). May the Holy Spirit apply His word to every heart!

CHAPTER IX.

SANCTIFICATION, OR MATURITY IN GRACE

*This is the will of God, even your sanctification.—
1 Thess. 4: 3.*

THOSE who go on growing in grace, using the requisite means according to the word of God, trusting, loving, praying, working in the name of Christ, will surely attain at some period of their progress a sublime state of maturity in the Christian life. Some call this sanctification, some prefer the term holiness, while others speak of purity or perfection; the particular terms employed are not essential. But the maturity here spoken of is not that which limits progress, for the child of God must go on increasing, abounding more and more in good works, and adding one degree of gracious attainment to another even till the latest hour of life.

With regard to the question as to whether this advanced experience is an instantaneous attainment, or a gradual work of divine grace, I see no reason why there should be any dissension among the children of God. In a sense both views are true. It is instantaneous so far as God is concerned, for in the very moment that we comply with the conditions the work is accomplished. But we are slow to comprehend and to take full advantage of our privileges. For this cause time is an element and the work becomes gradual. The vital thing is to get the blessing, however it

may come. "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before," like the great apostle we must "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3: 13, 14).

What, then, is a mature Christian life? Adopting Scripture phraseology, I reply: It is perfect peace, perfect trust, perfect love, perfect patience. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength" (Isa. 26: 3, 4). "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace" (Psa. 37: 37). "Perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4: 18). "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1: 4). "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5: 22-24). "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1: 5-8).

When the elements pointed out in the foregoing Scriptures combine in one's life there can be no mistake as to the maturity of his Christian character. The Christ life is in

him. He is abiding in Christ, and Christ is dwelling in him, "the hope of glory." He is fulfilling the conditions laid down in the opening sentences of the Sermon on the Mount, and reaping the glorious fruits of that Mountain of Beatitudes. He is enjoying "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." He is obeying the command to love God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength, and his neighbor as himself. He is trusting, and his Lord is doing the keeping, giving him grace, strength, peace and joy. The Master whom he loves and trusts is working in him for purity, for growth, making him strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Is such a state of grace possible? If not, what is the meaning of these commands and exhortations, these promises and prayers, these expressions of the will of God? Listen to these words from the Old Testament: "Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." "Ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44). Now hear the words of Christ to His disciples: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). And Paul echoes this command of his Master when he exhorts the Corinthian Christians to "be perfect."

This maturity is expressed as the will of God. "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," we are taught to pray by Christ Himself. And Paul says to the Romans: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable

unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12: 1, 2). "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess. 5: 16-18). "This is the will of God, even your sanctification."

This great spiritual blessing is definitely promised in the Scriptures. "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live" (Deut. 30: 6). "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh" (Ezek. 36: 25, 26). "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. . . . If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1: 7, 9).

This blessing is prayed for in the Bible. David prayed: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psa. 51: 10). Christ prayed for His disciples: "Sanctify them through thy truth. . . . Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us . . . that they may be one, even as we are one; I

in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one" (John 17:17, 20-23). Likewise Paul prays in behalf of the Christians at Thessalonica: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23). In this Pauline prayer the terms used call for sanctification "in every part, and every part perfectly."

There are also numerous exhortations in the Scriptures to seek this maturity of character. To the Philippians Paul says: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded" (Phil. 3:13-15). To the Roman church he writes: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:1, 2). The apostle Peter also advises those to whom he writes: "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:14-16). A most significant utterance is that of Paul to the Corinthians: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our-

selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7: 1). In similar vein says the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Therefore leaving the principles (rudiments) of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection" (Heb. 6: 1).

Now, would God give commands which it is impossible to obey? Would he make promises and express His will in terms which He would not fulfill? Would the Saviour and His apostles pray for and exhort us to seek after that which could not be attained? Is it not one of the principal objects of the gospel ministry to lead the people on to perfection? Surely, if the primary object is to call sinners to repentance, the second is to call the righteous unto holiness. Accordingly the apostle Paul told the Ephesians: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph. 3: 14-19). And speaking of Christ, the ascended Head of the Church, he says: "He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge

of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4: 11-13).

But some one will ask: What do you mean by sanctification, or Christian perfection? Plainly stated, this is meant: It is to be separated from all sin, to be liberated from the bondage of iniquity, to be cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. It is a state of grace in which one does not voluntarily commit sin, but loves God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself. It is to be pure, holy, to have that mind which was in Christ, to have all the graces of the Spirit shining in the life. It is to be so consecrated to God and mature in His service that, being filled with the Spirit, sin as a habit is expelled from his life.

However, the inquirer may ask: What does the apostle mean by saying: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"? This is explained in a succeeding verse: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1: 8, 10). But is it not expressly stated: "There is no man that sinneth not"? Yes, it is contained in Solomon's prayer, and it may be interpreted by quoting the words of Paul: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23). We are not compelled to live in sin, nor must we continue in sin that grace may abound. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin;" that is, does not make sin his habit, as the form of the verb indicates (1 John 3: 9). And the gracious promise is: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1: 9).

There is a close relationship between justification, or regeneration, and sanctification, but they are not precisely the same. Sanctification is a high degree in justification. When one is justified and regenerated all sin has been removed for the time being; but there is not that strong, persevering and preserving faith, and that fulness of abiding love, that characterizes the sanctified soul. In justification there may be occasional sinning and repenting, but sinning is out of order in the sanctified man. Sanctification is begun in justification, and it is possible that one may leap into that sublime state at the time of conversion; but usually it is a gradual work, which may be expressed in the words of an apostle: "Building up yourselves on your most holy faith" (Jude 20).

But nothing that has been said is intended to mean absolute perfection, or such a degree of grace that nothing higher can be attained. Such perfection belongs to God alone. Therefore a "perfect" Christian can grow in grace. He is better fitted than others to grow, just as a healthy child grows faster than a sick one. Plants grow more rapidly after the soil has been loosened and the weeds and grass have been removed. So with the perfect Christian, there is nothing to retard his growth. To ask how one already perfect can become more perfect, is merely to juggle with words. The perfection here advocated is one of kind and not of degree, a thing of quality and not of quantity. Perfection in kind or quality does not exclude an increase in degree or quantity; as, for example, a drop of water may be increased in quantity while the quality remains the same. The drop may be as pure as the fountain from which it is taken. Increase of

capacity calls for a corresponding increase in the quantity of that which is intended to fill it.

Nor does the word "perfection" as here used require that one shall be perfect in knowledge, free from ignorance, error, mistakes, or temptation. To these infirmities we shall all be exposed as long as we dwell in the flesh. But these are not sin in the Scriptural use of the word, which is the voluntary transgression of a known law. Rather are they infirmities, imperfections for which we are not accountable unless we are wilfully ignorant. As John Wesley says: "How can a liableness to mistake consist with perfect love? Is not a person who is perfected in love every moment under its influence? And can any mistake flow from pure love? I answer: Many mistakes may consist with pure love. Some may accidentally flow from it; I mean love itself may incline us to mistake. The pure love of our neighbor, springing from the love of God, thinketh no evil, believeth and hopeth all things. Now this very temper, ready to hope and believe the best of all men, may occasion our thinking some men better than they really are. Here then is a manifest mistake, accidentally flowing from pure love."

Another caution may be necessary. To use again Mr. Wesley's language: "While we must guard in the explanation of this doctrine against setting Christian perfection too high, we must also beware lest we set it too low. How shall we avoid these extremes? By keeping to the Bible and setting it just as high as the Scripture does. It is nothing higher and nothing lower than this: the pure love of God and man; the loving God with all our heart and soul. It is love governing the heart and running through all our

venture to reply that I do not belong to the ranks of those who exhort others to go forward, while they themselves tarry behind. By the grace of God I am in hot pursuit after this high attainment in the Christian life. I am hungering and thirsting after it, and if I have not attained it, or do not attain it in this world, I am resolved to die trying. Let us here and now make a solemn covenant, dear reader, to tarry no longer over the rudiments of the doctrine of Christ, but to "go on unto perfection." And let our fervent prayer be this:

"Come, Saviour, Jesus, from above!
Assist me with Thy heavenly grace;
Empty my heart of earthly love,
And for Thyself prepare the place.

"O let Thy sacred presence fill,
And set my longing spirit free!
Which pants to have no other will,
But day and night to feast on Thee.

"While in this region here below,
No other good will I pursue;
I'll bid this world of noise and show,
With all its glittering snares, adieu!

"That path with humble speed I'll seek,
In which my Saviour's footsteps shine;
Nor will I hear, nor will I speak,
Of any other love but Thine.

"Henceforth may no profane delight
Divide this consecrated soul;
Possess it, Thou who hast the right,
As Lord and Master of the whole."

CHAPTER X.

THE CHRISTIAN'S HISTORY IN BRIEF

But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.—Romans 6: 22.

PAUL'S inspired words at the head of this chapter seem to me to give the Christian's history in short compass.

That history may be fitly divided into four sections, corresponding to the four parts of the apostle's declaration.

The first thing to be noted is freedom from sin, according to the words of Paul: "Being made free from sin." This is essential to Christian character and life, and every sincere seeker of religion is aspiring to it. Realizing the bondage of sin, he longs and cries out for deliverance. Men of the world profess to set great value upon freedom. It is eagerly sought after in both individual and national affairs. Infringe upon the liberties of a people, and you arouse all the ire of which their natures are susceptible. With many the love of liberty becomes an absorbing passion. Patrick Henry was never more thrillingly eloquent than when he appealed to love of liberty in the immortal words: "Give me liberty, or give me death." Not a few men have dared to die for it. It has been the remote, if not the proximate, cause of every war that has deluged the earth with blood from the beginning until now. Literature and art have vied with each other in extolling it. Monuments of marble or bronze in many cities

and on many battlefields are intended to perpetuate the memory of heroes who shed their blood in the cause of freedom. The inscription "*Sic semper tyrannis*" on the shield of Virginia is a magnificent tribute to liberty.

In order to fully appreciate freedom one must have been deprived of it. Behold how tenaciously those who were once slaves cling to liberty! Freedom with poverty and rags is preferable to slavery with abundance of food and clothing and nothing to arouse anxious care. But how unworthy is earthly freedom to be compared with that spiritual freedom of which the apostle speaks! Man may deprive his fellow-man of his liberty, and force him to obey under the lash or at the point of the bayonet. He may manacle his prisoner hand and foot and immure him in a dungeon where midday and midnight are alike. But, thank God! his power extends no further. The mind and soul are beyond his control. But, alas! there is a cruel foe who can do what man cannot. Sin, the remorseless tyrant, enslaves body, mind and soul both in this world and in the world to come. It drowns the reason, deadens the feelings, dethrones the will, enervates the mind, enfeebles the body, and ultimately destroys both soul and body in hell. See the depth of degradation into which the drunkard is plunged. With body, mind and soul going to wreck, he rushes on his mad, destructive course, apparently oblivious of his peril. This is but a specimen of sin's enslaving power. If we have received the blessed boon of deliverance from the slavery of sin, let us learn to appreciate it, and resolve by the grace of God never again to be enslaved. Let us cling to it with a tenacity that neither life nor death can overcome.

If we esteem so highly our civil freedom, let us value our spiritual liberty as a thing beyond all price.

But let us ask, What is freedom from sin? It includes the pardon of all past sin, a sense of God's favor and acceptance, deliverance from the dominion of Satan, redemption from the curse of the law, and security against "the wrath to come." But this is not all. It is to have power to resist and overcome temptation to commit sin. It is to have heart, mind, soul and body so subdued by the grace of God and so controlled by the indwelling Spirit, that Satan has no power to lead astray, and the world no enticement strong enough to allure the soul from the side of its Master and Saviour. Such is this blessed freedom. In view of this who would not be a Christian freeman? Yet, alas! how many, blinded by the god of this world, would make freedom to consist in licentiousness and self-gratification, worldly emolument and enjoyment, and so finally reap as their reward for serving the world, the flesh and the devil a bondage and a misery from which there is no escape.

"Being made free," says the apostle. Who is it that frees us from sin? No power of our own has done the work; not our energy, or prayers, or faith, or works of righteousness, for there is no power in us. The might that sets us free is the unmerited gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:5-7). It is the

work of the Divine Spirit through the abundant mercy of God in Christ. Thou, O Son of God, hast purchased our freedom. Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. Thou alone art the meritorious cause of our introduction into "the glorious liberty of the sons of God." Thou wilt redeem us from the grave and give us incorruptible bodies of glory and honor, and wilt bring us into the Holy City. Thou wilt clothe us with white robes, put golden harps into our hands, place starry crowns upon our heads, and fill our hearts and tongues with new songs, even praises unto our God. Thou wilt make us "kings and priests unto God," and when we join the blood-washed throng around thy throne we will unite with them and with angels and archangels in the triumphant song: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5: 12).

The second chapter in the Christian's history is outlined in the words: "Become servants of God." Emancipation from sin is logically followed by consecration to God. He who becomes a Christian exchanges masters. Not only has he a new Master, but he has become a new servant. He has laid aside the filthy rags of self-righteousness, and has been clad in the white robe of faith and truth. He has buckled on the Christian armor—the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. His feet are "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." "He is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5: 17). Whereas he

was once an alien and a stranger from the commonwealth of Israel, speeding onward to certain destruction, the willing slave of Satan, that cruel, deceitful master; he is now the servant of Him whose name and nature is love; whose attributes are justice, mercy, truth and goodness; who is all-wise, all-powerful, full of tenderness, delighting in mercy even while He subjects His children to needful discipline. Such a Master is our God. Who would not esteem it an honor to be His slave! Some one has truly said: "To be called a friend of God is high; a son of God, still higher; but to be called a servant or slave of God, in its proper acceptation, is higher than all. It is the highest character which any soul of man can attain on this side of eternity." To be a true servant of God is to feel that we belong no more unto ourselves, but entirely to God, our wills being completely swallowed up in His perfect will. Let us ask ourselves: Do we exhibit the characteristics of true servants? Are we humble, respectful, submissive, cheerful, willing and obedient? Are we faithful in guarding and promoting our Master's interests? Or are we idle complainers and murmurers, thinking more of our own comfort than of His glory? Were He to call for us at midnight, would He find us slumbering and unready? When aroused would we complain: "My Lord is a hard master"? Or would we be on the alert to answer His earliest call, and eagerly ask: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Oh, that all who profess to be Christians were thus faithful, waiting and watching, alive to all the interests of their Master's kingdom! Oh, that the honor and glory of our Lord were uppermost in every heart! Then would Christian example exert its full

power for good, the Church would be clothed with invincible might, the banner of the Cross would be planted everywhere. Then would sinners be converted in multitudes, and a flame of love would spread through all the earth, consuming the dross of sin, and evoking songs of praise from every heart and tongue. And then, whenever the tomb was opened to receive the sacred dust of the pious dead, those who gathered around the grave could confidently sing in the blissful hope of a better life:

“Servant of God, well done!
Thy glorious warfare's past;
The battle's fought, the race is won,
And thou art crowned at last.”

We enter now upon the third chapter of the Christian's history. This and that which follows it are results of those already discussed. The apostle's meaning may be thus freely stated: “When ye are made free from sin and have become servants of God, then ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” There is an inseparable connection between profession and practice, genuine faith and godly works. He who professes to love God, but does not keep his commandments, belies his profession and brands himself as insincere. There is no better test of a servant's character than his daily conduct. Paul asks the Roman Christians: “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Rom. 6:16). The tree is sure to be known by its fruit. Hear the words of the Master: “Do men gather grapes of

thorns, or figs of thistles? . . . A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matt. 7: 16, 18). According to this teaching, the Christian who is made free from sin will inevitably bring forth the fruits of righteousness.

The first development of it will be the purification of the desires of the heart. Love will reign where in time past anger, malice, envy, revenge, and such like unholy passions held sway; love to God, love to Christ, and love to our fellowmen. Justice will take the place of injustice; truth will prevail in the inward parts; righteousness, meekness and temperance will abound. This does not mean that there will be no temptations from the world, the flesh and the Devil. Evil suggestions may arise in the heart, but they will not have dominion over the conduct, but will be banished by the grace of the indwelling Spirit.

From these principles implanted by the Holy Spirit will spring the outward fruits of righteousness—a holy conversation, an upright walk, a pure and godly life, a faithful discharge of duty, deeds of charity, kindness and benevolence. Let us ask ourselves such questions as these: Are we fruit-bearing Christians? Jesus said: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15: 8). Are we walking in a manner becoming to the servants of God, recommending the religion we profess by our daily conduct and speech, diffusing all around us the glow of spiritual gladness, showing that we have passed from darkness to light and from the power of sin and Satan into the service of God? Are we obeying the command of Christ: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your

good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven?" (Matt. 5:16). Are we diligent in business, "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality"? (Rom. 12:11-13). Are we doing good to the bodies, minds and souls of men, as far as lieth in us? Are we burning with zeal and flaming with holy desire to promote the glory of God and the welfare of humanity? Is sin becoming daily more and more hateful in our eyes? Is holiness becoming more and more lovely, and heaven increasingly real? Are we allowing all the Christian graces to have full sway in our lives? If so, then we are servants of God, and only abiding our Master's time to call us from labor to reward, to the blessed mansions which He has prepared for His faithful servants. We are only waiting for the consummation of a life of service—for what the apostle calls "the end everlasting life."

This brings us to the final chapter in the history of a true Christian, in which, having been freed from sin and made a servant of God, and having developed the holy fruits of the Spirit, he obtains the coveted prize of all his striving, and becomes the happy possessor of everlasting or eternal life. When the apostle speaks here of "the end," he does not mean the ending of a former state, but the arrival of a complete and perfect one, a fulfilment, an end accomplished, a consummation, a triumph. Such is the Christian's end. In this world he has had many a hard-fought battle. Many lions have roared and threatened in his pathway. The pilgrim has climbed many hills and mountains of difficulty. He has been down in the "Slough of Despond," has threaded the

"Valley of Humiliation," and has floundered amid the bogs and briers of "the Enchanted Ground." It may be that he has been so nigh to the pit of Destruction that he almost felt the burning breath that comes sweeping from its mouth. Possibly persecution has flamed about his head, and he has been chastised and cast into prison, like the apostle Paul, to feel the pangs of hunger and thirst, and the discomforts of cold or heat. Like Lazarus, he may have coveted the crumbs that have fallen from the tables of affluence, while only the dogs have been his physicians.

Beyond doubt, such a man has been the target of evil spirits, who have buffeted him, plied him with their seductive arts, and tempted him to go astray. At times he may have yielded somewhat to these evil influences, and gone aside, as John Bunyan would say, into "By-path Meadow," because the going seemed easier there. But on such occasions he has soon recognized his error, repented in sackcloth and ashes, and has hastened to seek forgiveness. Then he has gone on his way rejoicing. Sometimes, too, his faith may have staggered under the heavy blows of affliction, or his zeal slackened in time of prosperity; but in the midst of it all he has maintained his integrity. Through the intercession of his ascended Lord, and by the help of the Holy Spirit, he has held fast his profession and clung loyally to his divine Master. And now he is only waiting to hear the invitation of the King: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," and the thrilling words of commendation: "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few

things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25:23).

These inspiring words and hopes have cheered and buoyed him up in all his conflicts, and now he is about to be crowned. The hour of his triumph is at hand. The last rung of the ladder of time is about to be reached; the last word in the final chapter of his probationary history is about to be written. Death, the last enemy, confronts him. It may be that friends are weeping at his bedside, but he is exulting in hope of eternal life. Hear him exclaim: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:7, 8). In the presence of the last enemy he triumphantly shouts: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:55-57). Around the couch of death the angels are hovering, ready to escort the victorious saint to his glorious home. Up yonder they have seen his spotless robe and resplendent crown prepared by Him whose touch turns basest dross into purest gold, and transforms the vilest sinner into the most immaculate saint. While they wait the last breath is drawn and all is over. Hark! heard ye not that shout? It is the "welcome home" of the saints in glory! Loved ones of the family circle who departed hence in the Lord in the years ago—father, mother, brothers, sisters—open wide their arms of welcome. Friends, kindred, neigh-

bors, associates, join in the happy greeting. Oh, glorious throng of friends, for none are strangers there! Bands of glorified ones who went to heaven in their pure infancy make the welkin ring with their shouts of welcome. And above all is heard the voice of the Saviour King, saying, "Well done! Welcome to Paradise!"

There at the heavenly banquet he feasts and never grows weary. His eyes behold and never grow dim. The pearly gates, the jasper walls, the golden streets, the crystal waters, the throne of the King, the whole city illumined by the light of God and the Lamb, fill his soul with perfect delight. He listens, and his ears never grow weary. Harmonious songs of praise in which his happy soul unites forever rise. Thus on and on he goes, enjoying, increasing, abounding and exulting in all that is true and holy and good throughout eternity. "The end everlasting life!" Oh, blessed end! Who can begin to describe the meaning of the climax which the apostle reached when he wrote: "The end everlasting life"! My heart swells within me at the thought. My soul burns with longing desire to realize this grand consummation, when I shall be released from the toils and cares and snares of the world, no longer liable to temptation and sin, no more subject to pain and affliction, suffering and sorrow. Oh, for the time when death shall be swallowed up in victory, when the soul shall rest from labor and sorrow, never more to be disturbed, forever beyond the power of change and decay, safe in the presence of Him "whose I am and whom I serve"! There with all my ransomed powers attuned to His praise and service, to enjoy all the happiness and glory of that unending life, which far transcends the power of

human language to express, or imagination to conceive, and which eternity alone can reveal! Reader, join me in rendering praise to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost for the Christian's glorious hope. Let us say to our souls: Run on a little longer, the goal of glory is just ahead. Be faithful unto death, and thou shalt receive the crown of life!

"Awake, my soul, stretch every nerve,
And press with vigor on;
A heavenly race demands thy zeal,
And an immortal crown!"

In the midst of these soul-inspiring anticipations I would gladly close this little volume, which is my legacy to the Christian world. But I wish in the fear of God and in love for the souls of my fellowmen, to give a parting word to those who are not Christians. If you are living without Christ, you are making for yourself a very different history from that of the Christian. Your first chapter is headed: "Being free from righteousness." Your second is: "Having become servants to Satan." Your third: "You have your fruit unto unholiness." And if you continue to write the previous chapters, your final chapter must be entitled: "The end everlasting death." For note particularly that the words immediately preceding Paul's history of the Christian declare of the sinful deeds of men: "The end of those things is death." And the words that follow point out the inevitable end of a sinful life: "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:21, 23). My fellow traveler to eternity, shall this be your history when the end is reached? "Everlasting death!" Will you sell your soul for a few paltry hours or days of

sinful pleasure, reaching out to phantoms that elude your grasp? Will you forge for yourself chains that shall bind you forever in a death that never dies? If it is a heaven of happiness to the Christian to know that his life shall last forever, what a hell of horror it must be to the sinner to know that his death shall never end! Devils and spirits damned would shout for joy if they could erase that word "forever," and be assured that their torments would sometime have an end. But .

"Forever is written on their racks,
Forever on their chains;
Forever burneth in the fire,
Forever ever reigns."

O sinner, forsake your sins to-day and turn to Christ, beginning from this time to live a new and better life. "The way of the transgressor is hard."

"Your way is dark, and leads to hell;
Why will you persevere?
Can you in endless torments dwell,
Shut up in black despair?
Why will you in the crooked ways
Of sin and folly go?
In pain you travel all your days,
To reap eternal woe."

Be thankful that God has spared you to read this message, and avail yourself of the present moment to come to Christ, your only refuge. Thank God that the last chapter in your history has not yet been written, and that the door of salva-

tion is not shut against you. Mercy stands with open arms to receive you, while God Himself with deepest solicitude, like the father of the prodigal, awaits your return. His message to sinful men, as voiced by His prophet, is this: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 33: 11).

May this be the happy history of every one who reads these pages: "Being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Amen.

THE END

SERMONS
DOCTRINAL *and* PRACTICAL

Sermons

Doctrinal *and* Practical



I.

CHRIST THE ONLY FOUNDATION

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.—1 Cor. 3: 11.

IT would be the height of folly, as it seems to me, for those who live under the meridian of gospel splendor with the ample sources of divine knowledge that we possess, to expect salvation upon any other ground than that laid down in the Holy Scriptures. It is true, man possesses conscience, an inward monitor which reveals a distinction in the mind between right and wrong, urging him to pursue the one and shun the other; and, no doubt, if man had continued as pure as when he first came from his Maker's hand, conscience would be his best means of learning the will of God, and the surest guide along the pathway of life. But since conscience has been impaired by sin its monitions have become imperfect—a feature in our constitution which every one at all conversant with human nature and the workings of his own mind must have observed. For what prompting would unaided conscience give us to love our neighbor as ourselves, to forgive those who offend us, to pray

for our enemies and requite good for evil, to be patient under tribulation and persecution, and to renounce every disposition to revenge? If conscience, then, which is acknowledged by all to be the chief moral guide that man possesses within himself, is incapable of leading him in the paths of rectitude and holiness, it follows that no other faculty of human nature is capable of being his infallible guide.

We must look, therefore, to some extraneous source for help, and the only reliable aid is found in natural and revealed religion. In the case of the heathen who are without the Bible, in which God's will is clearly revealed, their conscience, aided by natural religion or the light of nature, and illuminated by the Holy Spirit, becomes the law by which they should be guided and according to which they will be judged. This the apostle Paul seems to teach when he says: "When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another" (Rom. 2: 14, 15). But thanks be to God, our lot has been cast in a Christian land. We have the high privilege of living in an age when the Bible, the holy oracles from which we may learn all our relations and duties toward God and our fellowmen, is accessible to every home and every individual, and the gospel it contains is proclaimed throughout the land.

Let us ask the question: What is the grand central truth revealed in the Holy Scriptures? Is it not Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who said of Himself, "I am the Truth"? Is

He not prefigured in every type and shadow and sacrifice in the Old Testament? Does not every prophecy culminate in Him and every promise find in Him its fulfilment? Is not He the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, of the New Testament? Here we find in an unbroken chain the record of His life, doings, sayings, doctrine, sacrifice, death, resurrection, ascension and intercession, and the object of it all is the salvation of man! By taking upon Himself the burden of the world's iniquities He laid broad and deep the foundation for the mighty structure of the world's salvation. Truly, "other foundation can no man lay" than that which Jesus Christ has laid. Socrates and Plato with all their moral rules could not reform the youth of Athens. No system of ethics formed by the ancients, however true or pure, ever satisfied the exigent needs of man's moral nature. No system ever devised by man can meet those needs. One might bring to the task the inspiration of genius, an intellect cultivated and skilled in the arts and sciences and profoundly versed in philosophy, and all the power of logic, and yet his effort to lay an adequate foundation would prove as ineffective as the attempts of the alchemists of old to discover the mythical "philosopher's stone," or the fabled "elixir vitæ."

Not only is all human power futile here, but the very angels and archangels are equally helpless in the presence of this mighty task. None but God Himself could lay the foundation on which to build the salvation of a sin-stricken race. This He has done by the gift of His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world. Upon this basis the patriarchs and prophets and the whole army of faithful souls who lived

before the Messiah's coming were saved. Reliance upon Him who was prefigured in the types and sacrifices of tabernacle and temple was their method of building the edifice of salvation. But we who live in the light of the gospel are possessed of the substance instead of the shadow, and the promises of ancient days have become the realities of to-day. Jesus Christ did come in the flesh, suffer and die upon the cross in atonement for our sins, and rise again for our justification. This is what constitutes the great and only hope for the salvation of the world.

Nor could God find any other sacrifice. In all His created universe of mankind, of angels and archangels, of cherubim and seraphim, He could not find a being capable of perfectly fulfilling His righteous law and satisfying the claims of offended justice. Could such a creature have been found, surely He would have spared His only Son. To deny the necessity of the incarnation of Christ with the sufferings and death which it involved, is not merely to charge God with a work of supererogation, but with the crime of murder against His own Son—a thought which one hesitates to put into verbal expression. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, and the blood that had to be shed was that of the Son of God.

The love of God the Father for His fallen creation finds its parallel only in that of His Son, whose love for mankind was stronger than the love of life itself. He gave Himself a willing sacrifice for human redemption. Accordingly He said concerning His life: "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:18). Had Jesus

chosen so to do, He could have baffled all the efforts of His persecutors and saved His life. Who can doubt His ability to protect Himself, in the light of the exhibitions of His power as recorded in the Gospels? An angry mob tries to cast Him to death from the edge of a precipice at Nazareth, but He overawes them with a look and goes away unharmed! See Him as He rebukes the tempest on the lake and compels the winds and waves to cease their raging. Behold Him as he gives sight to the blind, heals all kinds of sickness, casts out demons, and raises the dead to life at a word! See Him as He throws off the shackles of death and rises from Joseph's tomb! When the officers came to arrest Him, there were twelve legions of angels waiting to scatter His enemies, as He Himself said; but He had no need of these had He desired to escape from the cross. With a word or a look He could have scattered His persecutors like chaff before the wind, and so could have gone unmolested on His way. But the sacrifice of His life was a mysterious necessity. It became the Captain of salvation to be made perfect through suffering. He must be manifested in the flesh, suffer and die on the cross. Here is the groundwork of our salvation. Here is the foundation of faith, hope, peace, joy on earth, and eternal rest and happiness in the world to come.

Who can conceive the things that He suffered? Could the mountains and hills of Palestine, the brooks and the vales, the seas and the rivers, find speech, what a plaintive story they would tell! Nazareth, Capernaum, Jerusalem, ancient cities whose streets were trod by the Son of man, could ye speak, what a tale of sorrow would be uttered! Bethlehem would tell of His lowly birth and of the manger in which His

infant form was cradled. Gethsemane would tell of His agony when the sweat of His body was dyed with the blood of His anguish. And again would echo the thrice-repeated cry: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39). But Calvary would show the climax of this greatest of all tragedies, and tell how the Son of God, though crowned with thorns, mocked, buffeted, spit upon, tortured and nailed to the cross, died still praying for his executioners: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Was mortal ever subjected to such indignity and suffering? What love and condescension we behold at the cross! How transcendent the love that brought God's Son to such a death, that He might ransom from eternal ruin the men whom He foreknew as those who would crucify Him! Yet, incredible as it may seem, there are those who can behold such agony, such unmerited love, and stand like a statue, shedding no tear, heaving not a single sigh, showing no sign of gratitude toward Him who shed His own precious blood for their redemption. It is right that the heart of every true Christian should be filled with sorrow in contemplating the agony and death of Christ, yet we are bound to rejoice also that in the sufferings of this innocent Victim we read the proclamation of our own freedom from the bondage of sin and Satan, and know that the way of the cross is the pathway to the blissful mansions of heaven.

In the preceding remarks I have tried to present Christ as the only foundation upon which the edifice of human salvation can be built, and to show that there was no other way for this foundation to be laid except through the sacrifice

of the Son of God in atonement for the sins of mankind, a sacrifice which He freely offered because of the great love wherewith He loves a fallen race.

It is now in order to inquire into the nature of this foundation. The first thing to be said is that it is a firm and secure basis upon which to build. Nothing can shake it. No power on earth or hell can undermine it. Health may fail, riches take wings and fly away, friends forsake us, storms of sorrow beat upon us, the malignity and cunning of earth and hell oppose our progress; but if our faith in Christ is firm and our hope is based upon Him as its foundation, if He is the source and end of all our desires and words and actions, then the structure we have reared shall never fall, and our peace shall never be destroyed. The promises of God assure us of the security of our lives when they are built upon Him. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee," was Isaiah's assurance of Jehovah's keeping power. On one occasion Jesus said to Simon, His apostle, "I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16: 18). The church was to be built, not upon Peter, as some contend, but upon the confession of faith that Jesus was the Son of the living God, which Peter had just made in behalf of himself and his fellow disciples. No weapon of earth or hell can overthrow the Church which He has purchased with His own blood, for His word is pledged to defend and save to the uttermost all who put their trust in Him. The security of His true servants is expressed with vivid emphasis in the concluding words of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount: "Whosoever

heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock" (Matt. 7:24, 25). And in contrast with this wise man He sets forth the case of the foolish builder: "Every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it" (Matt. 7:26, 27). Let every reader, then, build upon the only foundation, for it will stand the tests of time and eternity. It is a fixed base, the Rock of Ages immovable and eternal. Fear not to build upon it, for it is upheld by the hand of Omnipotence. If you repose upon Christ all will be well; the darkest cloud will be fringed with celestial light that will illumine your pathway to the skies and to the City of the Living God.

This foundation is not only firm and secure; it is also wide, extensive, comprehensive. It is as vast as eternity, as comprehensive as the universe, reaching from the first Adam to the latest man that shall breathe the breath of earthly life. To measure it is beyond the power of angelic minds, though they are said to desire to look into things pertaining to the redeeming work of Christ (1 Peter 1:12). Multitudes of faithful souls have built upon this foundation, and have left behind them in death a joyous testimony to its sufficiency and its power to satisfy the needs of an immortal mind. Other multitudes in the years to come will plant their feet upon

this rock and find it firm and satisfying. Thanks be to God, it is free to all, for "there is no respect of persons with God." Jesus tasted death for every man, the Scriptures assure us, and "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound;" "for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5: 19, 20). I rejoice that the great commission bids the messengers of Christ to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." It is a joy to read of that feast which was made, and when the invited guests would not come, the master sent out his servants into the highways and hedges to bid the poor, the maimed, the halt and the blind to share his hospitality; and when these were brought to the table to hear it declared: "and yet there is room." This parable was spoken to illustrate the wide and loving hospitality of our Heavenly Father, whose invitation through the prophet is: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isa. 55: 1). This invitation finds an echo in the last chapter of the Bible: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22: 17).

Note here also the ease with which this foundation may be approached. It is just "come." Come, casting away every selfish hope, leaving every weak and decaying foundation. Come just as you are, without one plea save that you are needy and that Jesus died for you. Come, believing only in

Him as "the way and the truth and the life." Casting yourself at His feet, let this be your consecration:

"Here, Lord, I give myself away,
'Tis all that I can do."

God has made the path so plain and unmistakable that you have only to follow it in order to find your way to life, honor, happiness and immortality.

And now, O man, raise your mind to the highest pinnacle of its power, and consider the cost of this foundation. What price did God pay to secure for you this salvation so freely offered? The blood of His own Son—who can estimate it? Imagination in its loftiest flight is baffled in the effort. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John 3:1). Will you reject such love and slight such mercy? "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" is the solemn question of God's word, with reference to the offer of salvation upon such easy terms, yet at so great a cost. Your pride must be abandoned. Your sham goodness will not keep you out of hell; for morality alone is a foundation as frail as the shifting sand. Only the blood of Christ can cleanse away your sins. All your prayers, faith, works, righteousness are dead without Christ. Only by the way of the cross can you climb to the sublimities of heaven.

Unconverted friend, would to God that I could make you feel your lost, ruined, undone condition; for then you might be induced to fly to Christ for refuge. If I could convince you that your hopes are resting on a tottering base, then you might flee to the Rock which is the only foundation that will stand the storms of life and death. It may be that you are standing upon the rotten crust of a sleeping volcano, and that soon the fiery forces beneath will burst forth for your destruction. Or, like the psalmist, you may be in a horrible pit, held fast by the miry clay, seeking a firmer foundation and finding none. Only when you cry out to God for help, with a godly sorrow for sin and a humble trust in His mercy, can you find the relief for which you long. But if you refuse or neglect to call for mercy, you will surely die in your sins and be lost forever. Beware how you trifle with the forbearance of God. Whatever you may have of wealth, learning, good works, and other things in which men are accustomed to trust, these will avail you nothing in the final day if you are without Christ as the foundation of your hope. As a watchman on the walls of Zion, I would warn you to flee from the wrath to come, to repent without delay and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. "For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4: 12).

And you who profess to be Christians, where do you stand? Are you building solely upon this firm foundation? Are you laying all upon Jesus? As for myself, I can say that He is my only hope. Upon Him alone I rely, and He is the source of every blessing. The language of my heart to Him is well expressed by the hymn:

"Could my tears forever flow,
Could my zeal no languor know,
These for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone:
In my hand no price I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

I made this resolution when I preached my first sermon: "Henceforth redeeming love must be my theme, and it shall be till I die," and this is my motto still. God grant that the last word this tongue shall articulate may be the name of Jesus!

"Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing Thy power to save,
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave."

But, Christian brethren, this self-crucifixion and self-dedication is not the special prerogative of the ministry. It is the privilege and duty of all. Then try yourselves by this touchstone, and see if whatsoever you do in word or deed is done in the name of the Lord Jesus. Plant your feet firmly upon the one foundation. And if you are a "half-way Christian," having only one foot on this foundation, I beseech you to regain your lost foothold. You cannot serve God and Mammon. With one foot on the rock and the other on the sand, you are in imminent danger of slipping into the bottomless pit of perdition!

Perhaps, however, you feel strong in the faith, and feel like saying with Paul: "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things

present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8: 38, 39). If so, I bid you go on, adding to your faith, growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Safety depends on continually advancing. Keep on building upon this foundation the edifice of hope and character, for the more you build the firmer will it feel beneath your feet. Ever keep in mind the glorious facts that Jesus came in the flesh, suffered and died for our sins, rose from the tomb, ascended into heaven, and there intercedes for us at God's right hand. Let your heart be cheered by the gracious promise: "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

II.

THE LAMB OF GOD

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.—John 1:29.

IT was in these words that John the Baptist introduced Christ to the people. John was an impressive figure as he stood by the Jordan clad in camel's hair with a leathern girdle about his loins, surrounded by a multitude of eager listeners, to whom he proclaimed: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. . . . I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." In the midst of his preaching and baptizing he beheld a man approaching, whom he recognized by the Spirit's help as Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. Thrilled by the sight he pointed to Christ and with loud voice proclaimed to the assembled crowds: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Concerning this introduction of Jesus as the Christ, the Lamb of God, it should be noticed, first of all, that it was miraculous. That this is true is proved by the declaration that John made twice over: "I knew him not" (John 1:31, 33). Although Elizabeth the mother of John, and Mary the mother of Jesus, were near akin and apparently intimate, it is not a matter of great surprise that the Baptist

and the Nazarene were unacquainted with each other. Jesus spent his early years in retirement at Nazareth in Galilee, while John lived a hermit life in the wilderness of Judea, a hundred miles or more to the southward, and in that age and country travel was slow and difficult. But it is certain that, even if they had met before, John had no suspicion that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. Very likely, if they had been acquaintances, the Jews would have accused them of having preconcerted this remarkable introduction. But only the intervention of God Himself enabled John to know that Jesus was indeed the Christ. To this he testifies when he says: "And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" (John 1:33). Thus by supernatural agency he was able to proclaim with authority in the language of the text: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

This introduction was also prophetic—a fact that gives additional weight to the preceding statements; for the gift of prophecy necessarily presupposes miraculous energy. The Baptist here foretells the true character and mission of the Messiah. The Jews in their pride were expecting an earthly sovereign, imagining him as coming arrayed in all the pomp and pageantry of an Eastern monarch, with royal diadem and robes of splendor, and surrounded by a gorgeous retinue of courtiers and servants. This figure of their imaginations they were ready to welcome as their king. But John the Baptist negatives all these ambitious notions and proclaims a

Messiah of vastly different type, when he declares Jesus to be "the Lamb of God," who came to save the world by the sacrifice of Himself and thus become the sin-bearer of humanity. To other eyes Jesus appeared as merely an ordinary man, without any special attractiveness of feature or form. In the young Nazarene they saw nothing especially to desire, nothing that indicated His divinity. But John, endued with the Spirit of prophecy, sees far more than the rest, and proclaims Jesus to be the supreme Sacrifice for sin and the only Saviour of men.

Furthermore, this introduction of Jesus by John was a most appropriate one. If we consider his language simply as a metaphor, it conveys a most impressive truth. All over the world the lamb is regarded as an emblem of innocence and gentleness. The history of Jesus as given in the four Gospels illustrates and confirms the fitness of the metaphor, when it shows Him as the sinless One in the midst of a world of wickedness, and as a pattern of gentleness in the midst of the vicissitudes through which He had to pass from the manger to the cross. But the application of the word "lamb" to Him in a typical sense makes this introduction peculiarly appropriate. The Jews well understood the place of the lamb in the observances of their religion. It was the animal offered in sacrifice daily upon the altar of the temple to make atonement for the sins of the people. And every lamb thus sacrificed pointed onward to "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Finally, it may be truly said of this introduction that it was simple, beautiful and full of meaning. It is at once profound and simple, a gem of expression, an embodiment

of the whole gospel. It declares or implies every essential to human salvation. It teaches that the world is lying in sin, and it points to the only power that can lift it into purity and peace. It invites men to look away from themselves, and exhorts them to look to Jesus, the Lamb of God, as the atonement for sin and the giver of salvation. John might have said, "Behold Jesus!" "Behold the Messiah!" "Behold the Christ!" But none of these expressions would have contained such depth of tenderness and fulness of meaning, nor displayed the character and mission of the Messiah so completely as the words that he actually used. No other form of speech could have more impressively shown the spiritual necessity of man nor the goodness and love of God, than that which exhibited the Messiah as God's sacrificial Lamb.

John himself felt the force of the words which he had spoken under the influence of the Spirit, as is evidenced by the fact that on the next day he used them again in introducing two of his disciples to Jesus. "Looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God" (John 1:36). It is not improbable that this was a favorite saying of John's, which he employed on other occasions. I, too, would use these words in the effort to introduce my readers to Jesus. Will you who are not already acquainted with the Lamb of God seek to know Him? No tedious pilgrimage is necessary in order to find Him, for He is near you waiting to receive you graciously. You are not required to bring gifts of silver or gold, for you have been redeemed, not with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of the Lamb that was slain. He offers Himself to you, and proffers you

His salvation "without money and without price." Just as you are, lift up your eyes and "behold the Lamb of God." His Spirit is knocking at the door of your heart. Can you slight so good a friend? Will you refuse acquaintance and fellowship with one who knows all your needs and is able and willing to help? Will you decline to know the only physician who understands your malady and is able to effect a prompt and permanent cure? Oh, that this may be the happy hour to which you shall look back in the years to come, as that in which you beheld with faith the Lamb of God and found in Him the Saviour from all sin!

Having noticed the chief characteristics of the introduction which John gave to Jesus in presenting Him to the people as the Lamb of God, let us now consider some of the peculiarities of this Heavenly Lamb. The first is that He was without blemish of sin. The Mosaic law required that the lambs offered in sacrifice should be without spot or blemish, and these lambs were types of Christ. Jesus was pure in body, mind, heart, soul and life, combining in Himself all that is true and pure, holy and good. His character bids defiance to the dissecting knife of the most acute infidelity. It has extorted praise from even the most stubborn atheist. All the mistaken zeal of His friends was powerless to lead Him, and all the malice of His enemies to drive Him, into the utterance of a single unwise word, or the performance of a single improper deed. Astronomers tell us that the sun has many dark spots in the midst of its glorious brightness, but here is a Sun in whom not a spot can be found to mar the splendor of His perfect brilliance. Among those born of women He stands without a peer or

parallel, whether in circumstances of comparative ease or of bitter pain and sorrow. Even on the cross, in that most trying of all experiences, He sent forth for His enemies the noblest prayer ever uttered: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." We think of Adam, as he first came from his Maker's hands, as possessing innocence, beauty and perfection in high degree; but Christ, the second Adam, completely eclipses the glory of the first man. Adam was only a sinless man, who did not remain sinless long; while Jesus was the incarnate God, perfectly uniting manhood with divinity, who, though tempted in all points as we are, was yet without sin. Oh, let us behold and admire and praise the glory of this Lamb, more beautiful than the Rose of Sharon, purer than the lily of the valley, fairer than the moon, and brighter than the sun!

Not only was He innocent and pure, but He was the sacrificial Lamb. Unlike Aaron, Christ is not only the priest, but also the Lamb for the slaughter. In Him are fulfilled all the sacrifices required by the Mosaic law. He is the Antitype of the paschal lamb, the sin-offering, the peace-offering, the burnt-offering. Hence, after His death all these were abolished. The legal sacrifices were animals without responsible souls, but the sacrifice offered by Christ, our great High Priest, was Himself, a person of infinite dignity and worth. Animals were sacrificed without their consent, but Jesus gave Himself as a free-will offering to take away the sins of the world. He affirms concerning His life: "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:18). The sacrifice of Himself thus of-

ferred was a sufficient sacrifice, whereas all others were imperfect. As the writer of the book of Hebrews affirms: "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10: 4). The continued repetition of these legal sacrifices argued their insufficiency. But Christ offered Himself upon the altar "once for all." This perfect sacrifice is sufficient for all men from Eden to the last sinner before time shall be no more. It satisfied offended justice, and it cleanses the penitent soul from all unrighteousness. As the prophet declares: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1: 18). Then let no one despair. Old sinner, young sinner, worldling, drunkard, libertine, whoever you are, however aggravated your guilt, come to the Lamb of God, for He can speak the life-giving word, and your sins will be taken away. There is no other refuge—no other name given among men whereby you can be saved. If you look to the law, you stand condemned. If you look to your own righteousness, you have none that can avail you. But looking to Jesus by faith you shall find peace and safety.

A striking peculiarity of this Lamb of whom we are thinking is that He is "the Lamb of God." That is, Christ is the Lamb provided by God Himself for sacrifice. Every other lamb was taken from the flock of the earthly shepherd, but here is the Lamb of the Heavenly Shepherd, the only one of His kind. Who is He, and why was He sent to be a sacrifice for the sins of men? This was not a glorified saint, not an angel or an archangel, not one of the cherubim or seraphim among the heavenly hosts. But He is the Son of God, the

only-begotten of the Father, the Lord of saints and angels! The possessor of all the wealth and honor of heaven forsakes the praises of the angels, and comes down to the humiliation of our human lot, not to gain the applause of men, but to save them from their sin and shame! Amazing thought! that God should give His Son for rebellious, ungrateful wretches such as we, and that the Son of God should offer His life as a ransom for His foes!

“O wondrous love! to bleed and die,
To bear the cross and shame,
That guilty sinners, such as I,
Might plead Thy gracious name!”

It is now time for us to inquire: How are we to behold the Lamb of God? As there is but one sacrifice, so there is but one way by which it may be appropriated, and that is by faith. Hear the words of Scripture: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” Not that faith in itself is meritorious, but because it links the soul to Christ who has all merit, faith is essential to salvation. Those to whom John the Baptist preached might have looked upon Jesus with the natural eye alone without receiving spiritual benefit, but only through beholding Him as the Lamb of God, the sacrifice for sin, could they have their sins taken away. And faith is indeed the queen of all the graces. By it we look backward and forward. It is the magnet of the soul that brings distant objects near. It is at once a microscope and a telescope discovering things concealed from the naked eye. It is also the

Christian's wings, that bear him aloft beyond the eagle in her loftiest flight. Come, let us take a flight on the wings of faith, traverse the nineteen centuries of this era, and catch glimpses of the Lamb of God.

In a Bethlehem stable let us behold a Babe in the manger wrapped in swaddling clothes. See the shepherds going in and looking upon Him, praising God for all they had seen and heard. Behold the wise men from the East worshipping Him and casting their gifts at His feet. See Him borne away to Egypt by Joseph and Mary, because of the angel's warning, to escape the murderous hand of Herod, and afterwards see them as they make their home in Nazareth of Galilee. By faith let us behold Him as He sits among the doctors in the temple at twelve years of age, and astonishes them with his questions and answers. See Him at the Jordan receiving baptism at the hands of John, and hearing the voice from heaven saying: "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." Now behold Him led from the Jordan by the Spirit into the wilderness, fasting forty days, and battling victoriously against the temptations of Satan. See Him as He goes from city to city, from village to village, over hill and valley, from house to house, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, feeding the multitudes, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, raising the dead to life, doing wonderful works the like of which the world had never witnessed before. Behold Him as He walks upon the waves and stills the angry tempest, and as He ascends the Mount of Transfiguration and reveals a glimpse of His splendor to three awestruck disciples. Follow His footsteps to Gethsemane, and there by faith behold Him as He prays with agony and

bloody sweat: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26: 39). Then see Him as they press the crown of thorns upon His brow, buffet and spit upon Him, bow the knee in mockery and cry: "Hail, king of the Jews!" Behold Him before Pontius Pilate, who declares: "I find no fault in him." Listen to the populace crying, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" See Him as He staggers fainting under the heavy cross to the place of crucifixion. Note the Lord of Glory in the cruel hands of His executioners, who drive the spikes through His hands and feet, while He prays for them: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!" Hear Him cry out of the darkness in which the heavens are shrouded: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Now let the ear of faith hear His triumphant shout, "It is finished," while the earth quakes, the graves give up their dead, and all heaven reverberates with the note of victory.

Behold the Lamb of God with the eye of faith, as the disciples reverently take down the body and bear it away to Joseph's new tomb, and later as He rises from that tomb the Conqueror of death. Hear the angels announce to His sorrowing friends the glad news of His resurrection. Behold Him as He manifests Himself during the forty days that He remains upon the earth, encouraging and instructing the disciples, and strengthening the faith of Thomas the doubter. See Him as He leads the disciples out to the Mount of Olives, speaks to them His last tender words of farewell, lifts His hands in benediction above their heads, and mounts in a chariot of luminous cloud to the skies. Then let our faith pierce the veil that hides the heavenly world from mor-

tal vision, and behold Him as He takes His place upon the right hand of the Majesty on High amid the acclamations of saints and angels, there to abide as the perpetual intercessor for those whom He has redeemed by the shedding of His blood. By faith we may hear the joyful anthem of the throng around the throne as they break forth in the ascription of praise: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!" Once again let us behold Him by faith in His Second Coming, not as a babe in a manger, but in the glory of His Father and the holy angels, when the throne of judgment shall be set, the nations gathered, the books opened, and He as the King upon the throne shall divide the wicked from the righteous, saying to His enemies: "Depart from ye, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels;" while to His friends He shall give the glorious invitation: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

All these things are seen by faith, that blessed gift of God which is next to the gift of His Son and His Holy Spirit to men. But the chief object of that faith as set forth in the text is the sin-bearing Lamb of God as He suffers on the cross for the salvation of the world. Let us linger by the cross and look until our hearts are ravished by the sight, and until we realize the blessings that come to us by way of the cross. If we thus behold with humble penitence and steadfast faith the Lamb of God, the most gracious results will follow. Sin will be taken away, for it is the work of Christ to bear the sins of men in His own body, and to take them away from the

penitent sinner. This was typified in the Old Testament by the scape-goat, over whose head the priest confessed the sins of the people, and which was afterwards led away and turned loose in the wilderness. Furthermore, sin being removed, other things are removed also: the wrath of God, the curse of the law, the fear of punishment. There is now no condemnation, because the soul is "in Christ Jesus" by faith. "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law;" but death loses its sting and sin is deprived of its strength by the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb of God. For him who looks by faith to this redeeming Saviour old things will pass away and all things become new. Christ will be "in you, the hope of glory."

O Christian, you who have already beheld the Lamb of God, continue to keep your eyes of faith fixed upon Him and you need not fear any evil that can assail you. In time of prosperity and in seasons of adversity; when tossed upon the billows of temptation and buffeted by storms of sorrow; when friends are few and enemies are many; in the days of health and vigor, and when the death damp is gathering upon your brow; when you draw the last breath with loved ones weeping about your bedside;—in every condition of life and in the supreme moment of dissolution, behold the Lamb of God, who died that you might live! To you, as to Martha of old, He says: "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11: 25, 26).

My unsaved friend, if you would be rescued from sin and from the wrath of a sin-avenging God, you must turn your eyes to Calvary and "behold the Lamb of God." There

is life for a look, if it be the look of repentance and faith. As the serpent-bitten Israelite in the wilderness had only to look upon the brazen serpent to find instant healing, so you may find salvation at once by looking to the Lamb of God, who was lifted up on the cross. There is no other means of deliverance from the dreadful malady of sin with which you are dying, but here you may find an infallible cure. But if you refuse, or even neglect, to look to Christ as your Saviour, there is no other hope of deliverance and you must miserably perish. I beg you, heed the warning that I bring you in all the earnestness of my soul, in full view of the account that I must give to Him who sent me forth as one of His messengers to call men to repentance. Heed the voice of God's Spirit speaking through His servant, lest in the final day when we shall assuredly meet before the Throne I should have to testify against you as a neglecter or despiser of the grace of God. But I can do no more than give the warning.

"His only righteousness I show,
His saving truth proclaim;
'Tis all my business here below
To cry, 'Behold the Lamb!'

"Happy, if with my latest breath
I may but gasp His name;
Preach Him to all, and cry in death,
'Behold, behold the Lamb!'"

III.

WATCHFULNESS ENJOINED

*And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.—
Mark 13: 37.*

THE Latin poet Ovid represented Argus the giant as having a hundred eyes, only two of which slept at the same time. Mercury, who was sent by Jupiter to slay him, is said to have put on his winged slippers and taken his sleep-producing lyre, with which he hastened to the side of Argus, presenting himself in the guise of a shepherd with his flock. When he began to play upon his Pandean pipes, Argus listened with delight, and soon invited the young shepherd to sit close beside him. Thus seated beside the giant, Mercury told interesting stories and played sweet strains of music until it grew late, hoping that all those watchful eyes might close in sleep. At length, as he told the wonderful tale of the discovery of the instrument on which he was playing, he saw that all the hundred eyes were closed; whereupon immediately he severed the giant's head with a stroke and tumbled it over the rocks.

Now, of what avail were the hundred eyes of Argus to preserve him from destruction, if all of them were shut in the hour of danger? And what are all our talents, gifts and opportunities worth, if we relax our vigilance and fail to watch against the perils that surround us? So I bring to my readers at this time the simple but impressive warning from the lips of Jesus: "Watch!"

Surely, no duty is more clearly inculcated in the Scriptures than that of watchfulness. It is urged by our Lord and His disciples under various circumstances and from various motives. After Christ had uttered His predictions concerning the destruction of the Temple and the signs of His second coming, strangely intermingling the two, He drew this moral: "Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Matt. 24:42). Likewise, after relating the parable of the Ten Virgins, he deduces the same conclusion: "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 25:13). Thus the need of watchfulness is urged by the dangers that await us in the future, whose hidden secrets, the Master says, no man can discern—"no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." It is further urged by Christ as a preventive of sin and a safeguard against temptation. One instance stands forth with special impressiveness. In the Garden of Gethsemane the disciples were sleeping while their Master was passing through His terrible agony. He had told them to watch with Him while He went apart in solitude to pray. And when He returned and found them asleep, He exclaimed: "What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. 26:40, 41). The duty of watchfulness is clear; and that there might be no doubt about its universality it is recorded in the Gospel by Mark that Jesus enjoined in the words of our text: "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

Patrick Henry, the peerless orator of Revolutionary times, declared: "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." In

similar strain it may be said that unceasing vigilance is demanded of one who would save his soul from death. It is necessary for us to keep our armor on, and be ever ready to meet the foes within as well as those without. For "watch" means more than simply looking, observing, regarding. The Scriptures warrant the inclusion of the quality of preparedness, for it is written: "Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24: 44). We know that the commander who allows himself to be surprised by the enemy brings disgrace upon himself; and so, if we permit ourselves to be taken unawares, a weight of shame and disaster will surely fall upon us. "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober." "Know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken through" (Matt. 24: 43).

In further presenting the subject of watchfulness I shall try to answer two questions: What shall we watch against? What shall we watch for?

Replying to the first of these questions, it may be said in general that we must watch against all forms of sin within us and without us. But more specifically, let me say that it is necessary to watch against what the Bible calls "the world." This includes not only men of the world who are not servants of Christ, but also the things of the world, whether they are objects of sight, hearing, touch, or whether they appeal to us through any of the avenues of the senses, inciting to illicit gratification in thought, word or deed. Of this "world" the apostle John says: "Love not the world,

neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2: 15, 16). The things of this life constitute one of the most dangerous snares that assail the soul. The pleasures of the world, its riches, its honors, its engrossing cares and its entangling friendships, too often, like thorns, choke out the word of eternal life. It is not always open sin that blasts our prospects of heaven; but lawful pursuits, innocent amusements, domestic and social duties, and such like things, often become by improper indulgence the occasion of sin. I once knew a man who read his Bible too much—a rare instance, for most persons err in the opposite direction. This man took up the notion that no other book ought to be read, and after awhile he came to the conclusion that he ought to do nothing else but read the Bible. As a consequence he lost his mind. As to amusements that are innocent in themselves, it is hardly necessary to say that they are often abused so as to decoy the unsuspecting one into actual sin. These worldly things we must watch against, lest we become entangled in pleasures that are short-lived, in honors that fade, in gains that are empty, and in charms that are counterfeit. Let us not be lured nor driven from the highway of holiness by the smiles or the frowns of this encompassing world, remembering that it is written: "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5: 4).

It is also essential that we should watch against what the Scriptures call "the flesh." There are dangerous foes within us, in addition to those without. And because they occupy the citadel of the heart they are the more dangerous, just as the traitor within the camp is more to be dreaded than the outward foe. Our evil and corrupt hearts are ever rebelling, and we must wage unceasing warfare if we would keep them in subjection to the will of God. "The carnal mind is enmity against God," and as such must be watched continually. What are some of the passions of the flesh that must be closely watched and kept under control?

First among these let pride be named—pride of birth, pride of place, pride of intellect, pride of wealth. The wise man of old declared: "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16: 18). Somebody has said: "More people throng Pride Row than any other street in the city of Destruction." At any rate, this is one of the Devil's favorite tools. If he can inflate one with pride, he finds the work of destruction easy. It is as disastrous to piety as the blighting mildew to the snow-white robe. It is rank poison to the soul and a root of bitterness in the world. It is a rank offense in the sight of a holy God; as it is written: "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly; but the proud he knoweth afar off" (Psa. 138: 6). Let every earnest soul watch diligently against pride.

Lust, or unlawful desire, may next be specified as requiring constant watchfulness. In the last of the Ten Commandments Jehovah commanded: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his

ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's" (Exodus 20:17). Unlawful desire is so easily aroused and is so dangerous to the soul that harbors it, that it requires the closest diligence for its suppression. To cherish it in the heart is as truly sinful as its gratification would be, and so it must be crushed in its very incipency. Besides the "lust of concupiscence," there is lust after money, ungodly greed after gain, a very prevalent trait of the flesh. Our Lord warns us: "Beware of covetousness," and Paul declares that "they that desire to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil; which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things" (1 Tim. 6:9-11). With emphasis would I repeat the apostle's warning: "O man of God, flee these things!"

Watch also against evil tempers—anger, malice, envy, revenge, and such like feelings. The ill effects of these ungodly passions are so familiar as hardly to need specifying. Among the results of such feelings are wrangling, quarreling, dissensions, strifes, wars, murders, deaths. Influenced by evil passions, men and women give free rein to their tongues and say things they would give all they have to recall. Under such influences men have imbrued their hands in the blood of their fellowmen, bringing misery upon others no less than upon themselves. It is bad enough to be angry, but if one's anger should be aroused, let him sin not; as the apostle says: "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Whenever anger develops into malice, hatred, revenge, it is

evil and only evil. Under such impulses Cain killed his brother and the Jews murdered Christ. No better advice could be given to young and old alike than this: Learn to control your temper. Remember that it is recorded in Scripture: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (Prov. 16:32).

Not only evil tempers, but evil imaginings, are to be watched against if one desires to guard his soul from disaster. It is in the imagination that fleshly desires find their stimulus. The deed is first pictured in the mind, and afterward it is acted out in conduct. And so the apostle James truly says: "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1:15). Evil thoughts will present themselves, but the sin consists in cherishing them and making them our own. To drive out the evil let us turn the mind to those things that are good and pure. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, . . . think on these things" (Phil. 4:8). Along with all this remember that each one of us has his points of special weakness—what the apostle calls "the sin which doth so easily beset us"—and let these weak points be guarded with special care. Pray for grace to see and realize what your besetting sins are, and earnestly seek the strength of the Holy Spirit to resist where temptation is hardest to overcome. Then watch with all diligence against the evil pressure of the flesh.

Not only are the world and the flesh to be watched against, but we must diligently watch against the snares of the Devil. Some persons profess to disbelieve in the existence of such a being, but the Scriptures plainly teach us that he does exist as a person, and human experience accords with Holy Writ. In the Bible he is called "the prince of this world," "the prince of the power of the air," and characterized as "a roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour." He tempted Eve to sin in Eden, tried his power upon Job, provoked David to sin, instigated the treachery of Judas Iscariot, and expended his force upon Christ Himself, but without success. In many different ways he seeks to lead men astray, even at times transforming himself into "an angel of light." Sometimes when we think him entirely overcome, we find to our cost that his evil vigilance has not been for a moment relaxed; for he lulls us into carnal security and then steals upon us unawares to strike the fatal blow. It is said that a certain irreligious master in the days of slavery had a pious old servant who used to complain of the temptations of Satan. The master made light of the old man's troubles and said it was all nonsense. The two went duck-hunting together, and the master killed some ducks and crippled others. At the close of the hunt the servant said: "Master, I understand why the Devil bothers me, but doesn't get after you. You didn't trouble yourself about the dead ducks, but gave all your attention to the crippled ones that tried to get away. Just so, the Devil is after me because I am trying to get away from him. But you, master, are doing what pleases him, and he doesn't run after you." There is much force in the old servant's remark.

I tell you, the Devil is a reality, the busiest and most active preacher in any parish. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish the temptations of Satan from the suggestions of our own evil hearts. The truth is, the world and the flesh are but tools in the Devil's hands. He prepares the tempting chalice of pleasure, which, though beautiful to the eye and sweet to the taste, is full of deadly poison to the soul. He inflames the passions which, unless subdued by the grace of God, sweep the soul like a whirlwind into the vortex of hell. No person is too holy, no place too sacred, no time too inopportune, for the exercise of his malicious cunning. Even the sanctuary of God is not free from his invasion. While Christians sing and pray and meditate upon the sacred word, he is there to distract their thoughts and to corrupt their worship. If the immaculate Christ did not find immunity from the wiles of the Devil, how can we expect to be let alone? If the Evil One is vigilant in plying us with temptations, is it not wise in us to be doubly vigilant in repelling them, and in guarding our own souls and those of our fellowmen? Let us imitate the example of Jesus, and keep our minds stored with the word of God, that we may have weapons with which to meet every onset of the tempter. The divine remedy is expressed in the words of the apostle: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4: 7). But how shall we resist, and use effectively the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," unless we are constantly on the watch for the enemy! Wherefore, "put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephes. 6: 11). Thus shall we be able at every onset to hurl him back as the rocks resist the furious onset of the sea.

Having attempted to answer the question as to what we should watch against, it is now in order to inquire: What must we watch for? Watchfulness is not only a negative duty, but a positive obligation also. In addition to watching against every form of evil, we are required to watch for every kind of good, that we may do good to our fellowmen and receive good into our own souls. Ours must be a lively Christianity. An industrious Christian will not merely accept opportunities when they come, but will make opportunities to grow in grace and to help other people in their upward struggles. In public and in private, at home and abroad, under all conditions, such a person will be gathering food for his soul that he may impart blessings to others. Not only will he be alert to gather moral and spiritual good from studying the Scriptures and hearing the word preached, but he will make use of all the means of grace. He will cull lessons from all that he sees and hears; from every spire of grass, from every blooming flower, from the insect that crawls beneath his feet, from the very grains of sand on which he treads, as well as from the towering hills and the gorgeous sunsets.

Inasmuch as one of the chief means of getting good lies in doing good to others, the earnest Christian will be on the alert for opportunities to serve. God never intended His children to be idle or selfish. He made us to be helps to each other, and surely there is enough for all to do. Are there no sick ones to be visited, poor to be helped, ignorant to be instructed? Where are the widows, the orphans, the distressed who need your care? Is not the whole world a field for the exercise of every generous and benevolent feeling

of the heart? By prudent management in husbanding time and means, and by the practice of a wholesome self-denial, each of us can do his part in relieving the necessities and alleviating the burdens of our fellowmen. The means of benevolence are not confined to the rich. A small token, a few flowers, a loaf of bread, a smile of affection, a tear of sympathy, will often contribute largely to the comfort of those who are passing through destitution and sorrow. I once knew a Christian woman of limited capacity and means, who used to spend Sunday afternoons in reading the Bible to people in their homes. A good old brother and sister who could not read used to say: "We never hear the word except when Sister D. comes." To relieve physical suffering and material need, while a good thing, does not satisfy all the demands of duty. The soul of man is a priceless jewel, an immortal principle, the importance of which surpasses that of the body as far as the glory of the sun exceeds the dim shining of the smallest star. That precious soul must share in our ministrations, and our best efforts should be expended in helping those who are trying to walk in the way of holiness. No less important is it that we should warn those who are going in the paths of sin and folly. By all means let us seek to lead these needy souls to "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Some of these imperilled souls may sustain to us the relation of husband or wife, of brother or sister, of parent or child. Some are our neighbors and friends, some are servants or employees, it may be. Let us seek to win them to Christ. Set before them a good example, put no stumbling-block in their way. Speak to them tactfully that "word in season" which is "like apples

of gold in pictures of silver." Watch for the seasonable moments, and let not timidity cause you to shrink from speaking the message which the Master sends by you. Thus you may serve others while also serving your own highest interests; for it is written: "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever" (Dan. 12: 3).

But aside from the evil that may be averted and the good that may be accomplished by constant watchfulness, there are blessed rewards attached to it, which more than compensate for all the sacrifices it requires. It yields an after peace, like that of the laborer after a day of toil, or a soldier after the tedious march or the sleepless vigil and the deadly strife. Yet this serenity of conscience which the watchful soul enjoys is not worthy to be compared with the blessedness that awaits him in the Better Land. Our Lord Himself gives the assurance when He says: "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching; verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them" (Luke 12: 37). What wonderful condescension in the Son of God, to serve His faithful watchers! How blessed will be those faithful servants in the banquet hall of their Lord! Is not the promise of such honor sufficient to inspire us to watch without ceasing? Remember that the promise is only to those who are found watching when He comes, and that watching means more than looking, observing, waiting—that it means readiness, preparedness for His coming and for all that lies beyond.

What more can I say to induce the reader to cultivate watchfulness? Ten thousand blessings invite you to be watchful, and ten thousand dangers utter their warning to the negligent soul. Watch for your own sake and for the sake of others. Watch under all conditions, at all times and in all places. And while you watch be sure to pray, for prayer is as needful as alertness. "Watch and pray," is the Master's repeated command. Would that these words of Christ were engraved upon every heart, enshrined in the memory of every saint and sinner, emblazoned on every altar, imprinted upon every landscape. Oh, that the very heavens bore in fadeless characters, so that all men might read them, the Master's command to "watch and pray"! Had I voice to reach the outermost circles of humanity, I would send forth those words upon their mission of warning. If I were preaching my last sermon, or speaking final messages to loved ones from a dying bed, I could scarcely find more fitting words than these: "Watch and pray; what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch!" Amen.

IV.

PRESENT SUFFERING AND FUTURE GLORY

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.—Romans 8:18.

THE chapter of which the text is a part abounds in strong expressions that are full of comfort and inspiration, and the words above quoted are full of encouragement and hope. The apostle here testifies to the great truth that the sufferings of God's children in this world, however great they may appear to us now, are really insignificant when contrasted with the glorious results that enrich him who patiently endures until the final distribution of rewards. Suffering is the universal law of human elevation, development and progress; but suffering is not an end in itself, but only the means that God uses to prepare us for the glory which He will reveal in us hereafter. Let us, then, notice in the first place,

The competency of the witness. It is the apostle Paul who here bears testimony in the words "I reckon," indicating his estimate as a result of experience. Surely, no man was ever better qualified than he to make this estimate and to pronounce this verdict. From the day of his entrance upon the service of Christ to the day of his martyrdom he knew no release from toil, no relief from trouble, no cessation from anxiety, no exemption from suffering. In body, mind and

soul he was continually subjected to affliction. Persecution of every kind was heaped upon him because of the cross of Christ. His name was coupled with every epithet of slander and disgrace that envy and malice could invent. His person was subjected to the severest and most revolting indignities. Fanatical Jews and brutal Gentiles combined to spy upon his movements and to bring about his ruin. At Lystra in Roman Asia he was mobbed and pelted with stones until to all appearance he was dead, and his body was dragged without the city walls to be devoured by dogs and vultures; but the same almighty Hand that smote him to the earth on the road to Damascus as he went forth to persecute the disciples of Jesus, now revived his exhausted vitality, healed his bruised body, and sent him forth to labor and suffer in the name of his Lord. At Philippi he was beaten with many stripes, cast into prison, and made fast by his feet in the stocks; but while he and his companion Silas were suffering and singing, an earthquake shook the prison walls, the doors flew open, the shackles fell away from their limbs, and the converted jailer led them forth to freedom. Time and space would fail to tell of all the persecutions that Paul endured.

But, in addition to the ills inflicted upon him by the enemies of the cross of Christ, there were many other sources of suffering in the pathway that he had to tread. As a traveler by sea and land he experienced the severest hardships. He traversed deserts and plains, roamed through forests and wildernesses, scaled mountains, crossed rivers, and encountered perils of every kind. He endured extremes of heat and cold, the pangs of hunger and thirst, and all the

lacerating strokes that poverty and want can produce. Many times he was tossed upon the stormy deep in imminent peril of his life. Three times he suffered shipwreck, and a night and a day he spent in the deep, probably clinging to some bit of floating timber or tossed about in some frail and sinking skiff. He himself has told us of his manifold sufferings in the cause of his Divine Master. In writing to the Corinthians to vindicate himself against the aspersions of those who were belittling his claims as an apostle, he uses these graphic words: "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:23-28).

From these details of the apostle's experience it is manifest that he made all sorts of sacrifices in pursuit of his holy calling as a minister of Jesus Christ. He preached the word in season and out of season, laboring incessantly night and day. All his powers of body, mind and soul were kept continually strung to their highest tension. His watchword was "Go!" and he counted no labor too great, no sacrifice

too costly, for the spread of his Master's kingdom. Was it told him that bonds and afflictions awaited him at Jerusalem? His reply was: "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. . . . None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20: 24). Where are the Christians of the present day, even in the ranks of the sacred ministry, who have the courage and patience to endure sufferings after the example of this heroic apostle? Oh, for the enduement of the Holy Spirit, to enable us to rejoice in tribulations whenever they come upon us in the service of our Lord, and to say as Paul said: "If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities" (2 Cor. 11: 30).

If Paul was qualified to testify concerning sufferings, he was also a competent witness to "the glory which shall be revealed in us." For he had glimpses of the Divine glory that were granted to no other man. Foretastes of the joys of the eternal world had been given him. He had beheld the glory of the Lord in the face of his Anointed, as the light from heaven streamed upon him, and had heard the voice of Him who spake as never man spake. He told the Corinthians that he had been "caught up to the third heaven," and had heard in Paradise "unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12: 2-4). The result of his privileged experience was that he longed to escape from this vale of tears, to recover the celestial vision, to depart and be with Christ, and thus perpetuate the

foretaste that had been granted him of the glories of immortality. Add to all this the fact that he was inspired by the Holy Spirit, who taught him to pen this heaven-born testimony, and surely the capacity of Paul to testify concerning the sufferings of this life and of their unworthiness to be compared with the glory to be revealed in God's saints, is established to the satisfaction of even the most incredulous mind. And to be satisfied with the competency of this witness should be enough to enlarge and confirm our faith in the truth of the text, that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

So much may be said concerning the competency of the apostle Paul as a witness to the truth of the text. Let us now look at the proposition from our own standpoint, and draw from our own experience. Things to be compared must have some points of resemblance, while suffering and glory are at opposite poles. Strictly speaking, they can only be contrasted. Note, however, that the apostle does not say that the sufferings of this present time cannot be compared, but that they are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.

As to the sufferings of this present time, what are some of them? The sin and fall of our first parents brought into the world sin and suffering of all kinds. Jehovah said to Adam: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou

taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3: 17-19). This is the general law. It is needless to attempt to enumerate our individual sufferings, for they are as diverse as our different countenances, varying with our several conditions. If, however, we had to suffer here a thousand years, what would that be in comparison with an eternity of glory? But in reality our days here below, though full of trouble, are also few in number. Soon the messenger will come to summon us away, and then we shall be lifted forever out of the "sufferings of this present time." And when we remember how great is the punishment we deserve on account of our sins—even "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power"—and yet behold the eternal glory to which we are made heirs by the blood of the cross, we are bound to reach the joyful conclusion that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Let us now try to catch a glimpse of that glory which far outweighs all mortal sufferings. The prospect is bewildering, for I am to speak of things too high for human tongue. Words are inadequate to fathom the depths of meaning here implied. But we learn from God's Book that this glory is unmixed and eternal, unmarred by sin, and undimmed by suffering of any kind. No longer shall we "see through a glass darkly," but "face to face" we shall behold the glory of the Lord, and be "changed into the same image from glory to glory." In that heavenly country, as there is no sin, so shall there be no suffering; for "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death,

neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

"There I shall bathe my weary soul
In seas of heavenly rest,
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across my peaceful breast."

The glorious experience of the redeemed soul immediately after death will be heightened at the resurrection, when these vile bodies shall be changed and fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, this corruptible putting on incorruption and this mortal putting on immortality. In that day every faculty of body, mind and soul will be unfettered, transformed, purified, intensified in action, and gratified to it fullest capacity. For example, the eye, now so useful but so limited in its scope, shall be so invigorated as to reach into the illimitable spaces of the universe and behold the beauty and grandeur that mortal eyes have never seen. And the ear, which now labors under many limitations, shall be quick to catch the most distant sounds, and shall gather in the exquisite harmonies of God's tuneful universe.

In that heavenly home all hearts will be filled with love and peace. There shall be no fear of wars or strifes of any kind, nor of anything that could mar the perfect happiness of the soul. The bonds of peace will be perfect, and each happy one will delight in the happiness of others. There we shall commune with "the spirits of just men made perfect," and "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Mysteries that have long baffled us in this world shall be unfolded as we converse with the redeemed and angelic

hosts. And with the innumerable throng we shall gather about the throne and give praise and glory to Him who first loved us, and to the Lamb whose blood has cleansed us from sin and made us kings and priests unto God. How blessed is the state thus placed before our imagination by the Scriptures! Yet these are but hints, for it is written: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. 2:9).

In view of all these things, who would dare to say that the sufferings of the present life, grievous though they sometimes may be, are worthy to be compared with the glory of the heavenly life? As well might darkness be made the rival of light, or death the rival of life. They are not worthy to be compared in their duration, for they stand in relation to each other as an hour to eternity; nor in point of cost, for one is the wages of sin and the other the purchase of the Saviour's blood; nor in point of magnitude, for the one is "our light affliction," while the other is a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

There are some important inferences that may be drawn from the fact that our present sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the promised future glory. One of them is, that we should be incited to patience and resignation under the sufferings and trials which befall us here below. Indeed suffering is one of the chief producers of patience. Hence the apostle says: "We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience" (Rom. 5:3). And oh, how much need there is that we should cultivate this virtue! How often do Christians indulge in murmurings and com-

plaints when under stress of affliction, instead of finding encouragement to trust and love God all the more. Let us, my brethren, be resigned to the will of God. "Let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:4). "Let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psa. 30:5). Patience, however, is not apathy, or insensibility to suffering. Nor does it exclude care and caution against it, nor effort to alleviate it. Without the exercise of these things suffering will fail to produce its legitimate results. He who by carelessness, idleness, or love of ease, brings affliction upon himself, or suffers it to continue, thinking to gain the consolatory results of patience thereby, will surely be disappointed. We are to abound in resignation and cheerful submission to whatever is absolutely necessary and unavoidable. To this extent let us endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, remembering that victory belongs to the faithful and the brave. Oh, that we might catch the spirit of the pious old patriarch of Uz, who, though deprived of his property, his children, and his bodily health, and suffering under the most grievous afflictions, found it in his heart to exclaim: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). In similar spirit St. Paul, in the midst of all his persecutions and sufferings, declared: "If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities" (2 Cor. 11:30). More than all, let us remember the example of Him who was greater than Job and Paul, and who in the excruciating agony of Gethsemane and

under the shadow of the cross looked up to His Father and meekly said: "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22: 42). It should comfort us to know that, "if we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (2 Tim. 2: 12).

Another lesson to be learned from the contrast between present suffering and future glory is that of cultivating hopefulness. Thank God, we are not only permitted to hope, but are incited to it by both precept and example in the Holy Scriptures. Indeed, without hope many pilgrims would lose their energy, become weary and turn again to the "weak and beggarly elements of the world" in pursuit of enjoyment. How many immortal souls would be driven to desperation without the lamp of hope to illumine the way! In God's Word we are told that the hope set before us in the gospel is "as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil" (Heb. 6: 19). The storms of suffering can never pluck away that anchor, if it is fastened to a living faith in the Son of God. The intensity of our hope is in proportion to our faith. According to our confidence in God, whose promises never fail, will be our hope of final deliverance from the sufferings of this present time, and our transfer to the enjoyment of those blessed mansions which our Lord has gone to prepare for His faithful servants. Let us, then, cultivate a strong faith in God, that we may look forward to the future with delightful anticipations, hoping, yet with patience waiting, to be "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven."

Last of all, it is proper to inquire: To whom is the truth of our text applicable? It must not be thought that all

sufferers are heirs of that glorious inheritance, which is "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." For suffering proceeds from various causes, and not every one who suffers is a Christian. Nor are we to understand the apostle Paul as teaching that affliction is a condition of salvation, when he says: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17). Suffering is rather a means to an end, employed by God to wean affections from the uncertain things of time and sense, and fix them on things above. No unconverted man can appropriate the consolation contained in the text, for no such person can appreciate the declaration that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Nevertheless, there is here an indirect, implied appeal to the unconverted. As the Christian shall gain glory inexpressible, so shall the unrepentant sinner reap misery indescribable. As no one is able to measure the heights of heaven, so none can sound the depths of hell. The saint in heaven and the lost soul in hell, like two diverging lines, forever separated, will continue to diverge through all eternity. And as no one can adequately describe the glory of those who are raised to life and immortality, so none can portray the misery of those who are raised at last to shame and everlasting contempt. But this may be said with the most solemn emphasis: The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the misery that shall be the everlasting portion of him who despises the grace of God, or neglects to avail himself of the great salvation freely offered in the gospel of Christ. Unconverted

friend, you have it in your power to escape this dreadful calamity. Make haste to embrace the gospel offer. Set out today for the kingdom of glory, and lay hold of the prize of life eternal.

To all true Christians Paul's estimate of present suffering and future glory is directly applicable. No one else can fully appreciate the doctrine of the text. It is the high privilege of God's children to count themselves happy in the midst of manifold temptations and trials, and in all their earthly experiences to rejoice "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Even the approach of death does not alarm them, because "the sting of death" has been extracted by the power of the Son of God. Their joyous anticipation of coming glory is well expressed in the poet's words:

"Who, who would live alway, away from his God?
Away from yon heaven, that blissful abode,
Where the rivers of pleasure flow o'er the bright plains,
And the noontide of glory eternally reigns."

Let us, then, cheer up and be of good courage, whatever troubles may fall to our lot. Why should we be cast down and fear to suffer, when we have such high hopes, such glorious encouragement, such heavenly comfort? Rather let us heed the apostle's exhortation: "Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, in every thing give thanks." For we know that for every tear the Christian sheds there is a cup of joy, for every sigh he utters there is a hymn of praise, for every cross he endures there is another star in his crown of glory. When adversity overtakes us, when affliction's heavy hand is laid upon us, when the wheels of life slow down

beneath the weight of years or the pressure of disease, when we are about to enter "the valley of the shadow of death," let us turn our weary eyes to these sweet words of the great apostle, who surely knew the meaning of what he said: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Aged fathers and mothers in Israel, your suffering time will soon be over. On the battlements of the New Jerusalem you will shortly stand and shout the paeans of victory. Young men, maidens and children, let us endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ; for before many years are past, if we are faithful to our Master, we shall join the great multitude around the throne, and blend our voices in hallelujahs to God, and in ascriptions of praise to the Lamb who redeemed us with his own precious blood. Amen!

V.

THE PRECIOUSNESS OF JESUS

*Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.—
1 Peter 2:7.*

THE name "Jesus" was not an uncommon one among the Jews. It is the Greek form of the Hebrew name "Joshua," and means Saviour. It was not only the name of the illustrious successor of Moses in the leadership of the Israelites, but also of the high priest in the times of Ezra, the father of Elymas the sorcerer in the island of Cyprus, and of Justus, one of Paul's co-laborers. But while many bore this name in the long stretch of Jewish history, no one ever fulfilled its meaning as did Jesus the Christ, the Saviour of the world. How fitting, therefore, was the charge of the angel to Joseph concerning Mary's child: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).

The name "Christ" was not given Him to distinguish Him from others who bore the name "Jesus," but to indicate His office as the Messiah of Hebrew prophecy. For it means "the Anointed one," in allusion to the fact that priests and kings were inducted into their official places by the pouring of the anointing oil upon their heads. So Christ was anointed by the power of the Holy Spirit as the prophet, priest and king, according to the prophetic word: "Thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy

fellows" (Psa. 45: 7). Thus His very name, as expressive of His character and work, is honorable and precious to His true disciples. They love it, hold it in deepest reverence, utter its syllables with pleasure, and rejoice to bear the title "Christian" because it links them to His most precious name. It is said that the mere mention of the "old Tenth Legion" was an inspiration to the Roman soldier. It is well known that the name of Stonewall Jackson always aroused the enthusiasm of the Southern armies. How much more ought the heart of every Christian to throb with joy and his face beam with pleasure at the mention of the name of Jesus! It is told of good Bishop Beveridge of the Church of England, that when about to die he forgot all his friends, even his wife and children. But when a visitor at his bedside asked him if he knew the Lord Jesus, he raised himself in bed and replied: "Yes, I have known him for the last forty years; he is my Saviour." And with this avowal of his faith he passed away to be with the Lord whom he loved. God grant that the name of Jesus may be the very last we utter with our dying lips, and that these hearts in their last pulsation may beat in unison with that of Him who gave Himself for us.

"Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace."

Not only is the name of Jesus precious, but His person is precious also, as a human being, one who has taken our nature upon Himself. I rejoice every day that He is my fellow

being, my Elder Brother, as well as my Saviour God. Much was written by the fathers of the early Church concerning the person of Christ, and various opinions were expressed as to His personal appearance. Jerome, Bernard and Chrysostom claimed that He was noble in form and appearance, beautiful to behold; while Origen, Tertullian, Basil, Ambrose and others maintained that as a man He was devoid of beauty and had no advantage of person. Perhaps both parties to this controversy had some degree of truth in their contentions. In our Lord's early youth His form was good and natural, His countenance beamed with the beauty and benignity of His character, and He fulfilled the ideal of the Psalmist who said: "Thou art fairer than the children of men" (Psa. 45:2). But it is not unlikely that as He approached the end His form was bent, His face bore the marks of sorrow and suffering, and that so the words of the prophet were verified when he said: "His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. . . He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him . . . a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 52:14; 53:2, 3). It is worthy of note that the Scriptures are silent concerning the physical appearance of our Saviour, and this is doubtless wise; for if we had an accurate portrait of Jesus the temptation to idolatry might be too strong for weak human minds to resist. All the so-called pictures of Christ are but products of the imaginations of artists, entirely without Scripture warrant. But blessed be God, the time is coming when our longing eyes shall "see him as he is," arrayed in a glory more resplendent

than that which adorned His person on the Mount of Transfiguration, and then "we shall be like him" and share His eternal glory!

But we behold the loveliness of the Man Christ Jesus still more vividly displayed in His character. To Him is fitly attributed every trait that is pure, holy, lovely, true and good. No base passion ever found place for a moment in His bosom. He was above all prejudice, malice, envy, revenge and evil desire. Every motive was pure, every action was right. Justice was tempered with mercy, meekness was combined with unflinching firmness, patience was united with invincible courage. Gentleness, humility, benevolence, compassion and sincerity shone in all He did and said. When reviled He did not revile again; though persecuted relentlessly He Himself persecuted no man. In the midst of all the indignities that were heaped upon Him He preserved an even mind. Neither the assaults of His enemies nor the mistaken zeal of His friends could draw Him into the least impropriety of speech or of conduct. Though the sun in the heavens presents huge spots to the astronomer's eye, the Sun of Righteousness, who is "the Light of the world," has no spot or blemish in His perfect character. He stands without a peer among the sons of men. His life has extorted praise even from the stubborn atheist and the unfeeling infidel. It is more beautiful than the rose of Sharon, purer than the lily of the valley, fairer than the moon, brighter than the sun, and altogether lovely. It rises to the height of moral sublimity, because it is more than human—it is Divine! The perfection of innocence and beauty that we are accustomed to attribute to Adam in

the garden of Eden fades into obscurity beside the sublime perfection of the Man of Galilee; for Adam was but a sinless man, while Jesus is the God-man, in whose person humanity and divinity are mysteriously blended. He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and "the express image of his person," the beauty of perfect manhood crowned with the flawless glory of the Godhead, a being whose character surpasses the power of human language to adequately describe. To say that "He is precious," while true, is but a feeble tribute to His worth. "Jewels to Thee are gaudy toys, and gold is sordid dust."

Still further is the preciousness of Jesus made evident in what He has done for us. What has He not done? What more could He do? He has loved us and given Himself for us. Beholding our miserable condition as the result of sin, His great heart throbbed with love and pity. He forsook the radiant throne of His glory which He shared with the Father before the foundation of the world, emptied Himself of His heavenly privileges, took upon Himself our nature, was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin; became our substitute, bore the penalty of our sins, suffered and died for us, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us back to God. In the words of St. Paul, He "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2: 7, 8). And all this was for our sakes, that Adam's guilty race might be delivered from the curse of sin, the dominion of Satan and the punishment of hell, and might

become heirs to "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 1:4). In all that He did and suffered there was no thought of reputation, no wish for the applause of the world. "The joy that was set before him" as a motive was the joy of unselfish sacrifice in behalf of others. No other motive actuated Him but pure, disinterested love, the most estimable of all the affections of the heart. How shall we appreciate such love? Ten thousand tongues would not suffice for His praise, ten thousand lives would be too few to spend in His service.

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

Again, Jesus is precious to every believer because of what He is still doing for us. He is our Advocate and Intercessor before the throne of His Father in heaven, as we are taught in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). Through Him our prayers ascend and reach the ears of the Majesty on high, and through Him the Holy Spirit descends into our hearts to be our ever-present Friend. As Jesus represents us in heaven, so the Spirit represents Jesus in our lives—which explains what the Master said to His disciples: "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judg-

ment" (John 16:7, 8). In the same strain Jesus promised: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth. . . He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:16, 17, 26). Combine with these gracious words that assurance of the apostle: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). Surely a Saviour thus interceding for us on high and ministering to us on earth by His Spirit should be inexpressibly dear to every renewed heart!

Last of all, let me say that Christ is precious on account of what He will do for us in the future. He pledges Himself to be our Helper in our wilderness journey to the very end, and when we come to the deep waters of the Jordan He will guide and support our feeble steps amid the rolling waves, and land us safe on Canaan's happy shore. Hear the Divine promise: "Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. . . For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour" (Isa. 43:1-3). He will also redeem our bodies from the grave, and fashion them "like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:21). He will strip from these bodies all that tends to mar or hinder, and will clothe them with glory and honor and immortality. This is not all. He will put us in possession of those mansions in glory which He has gone to prepare for us; and then "we shall

be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Not only shall we see Him and be like Him, but we shall be kings and priests unto God, "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" for ever and ever.

But our estimate of what Christ will do for us in the ages to come is necessarily imperfect; for "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. 2:9). But whatever these unrevealed things may be, we know that they are the purchase of the precious blood that was shed on Calvary for us. And thus His preciousness is enhanced in our sight. In whatever aspect we view Him He is precious and honorable; whether in His name, His person and character, as prophet, priest, king, judge, deliverer, mediator, redeemer, advocate and intercessor; or whether in the mighty work He has done for us in the past, is doing for us in the present, or has engaged to do for us in the future. He is precious as the One who saves us from sin, who is our light and salvation day by day, who is the way and the truth and the life to our souls. He is precious to us when He calms the raging storms and gives us peace; precious to us in death as our rod and staff, our hope of resurrection and eternal life. He is precious as the One who possesses all riches, all power, all glory; as the One who knows us thoroughly and sympathizes with us in all our sorrows; as the One who died for us, who now lives for us in heaven, and who has promised to receive us to Himself, that where He is there we may be also.

Now let me ask: "What think ye of Christ?" Is He precious to your soul? Is He the fairest among ten thousand

and altogether lovely? Do you prefer Him above your chiefest joy? Is He more to you than father or mother, husband or wife, brothers or sisters, children or lands—more precious to you than your own life? This is the esteem in which we should hold Him. May we who love Him grow in love continually, and may those who now do not love Him begin this moment to behold His charms and go on loving Him more and more! Would that every reader might join me in uttering from the heart those words of Philip Doddridge:

“Jesus, I love Thy charming name;
’Tis music to my ear;
Fain would I sound it out so loud
That earth and heaven might hear.

“Yes, Thou art precious to my soul,
My transport and my trust;
Jewels to Thee are gaudy toys,
And gold is sordid dust.

“All my capacious powers can wish
In Thee doth richly meet;
Nor to mine eyes is light so dear,
Nor friendship half so sweet.

“Thy grace shall dwell upon my heart,
And shed its fragrance there,
The noblest balm of all its wounds,
The cordial of its care.

“I’ll speak the honors of Thy name
With my last, laboring breath,
And, dying, clasp Thee in mine arms,
The antidote of death.”

VI.

SYMPATHY FOR THE SLAIN

Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.—Jeremiah 9: 1.

THIS is one of the most pathetic and touching passages to be found in all the Sacred Writings. It deserves to be ranked with the prayer of Moses when he came down from Mount Sinai and found the people worshipping the golden calf: "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written" (Ex. 32: 31, 32). It might well be classed with Queen Esther's pitiful plea before King Ahasuerus, when she fell at his feet and cried: "How can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?" (Esther 8: 6). It merits a place beside the great cry of the apostle Paul when in heaviness of soul he exclaimed: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9: 1-3). It is not too much to say that it is worthy to be associated with the lamentation of Him who was greater

than Moses and Paul—the Son of God who wept over the doomed city and cried: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Matt. 23: 37, 38).

The prophet Jeremiah, on account of the calamities which were about to come upon the people of Jerusalem and Judah on account of their sins, represents himself as desperately wounded in soul, broken-hearted, turning black as one about to die. Says he: “For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?” Then he exclaims in the language of our text: “Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!”

Notice the tenderness of the prophet’s expression: “The daughter of my people.” Every father knows how close a daughter is to his heart. What is it that is slaying the people? Is it not sin in its multiplied forms? Whichever way we turn we behold the victims of sin. In every land, in every home, along every highway, at the corners of every street in city, town, village, or hamlet, we see the terrible carnage. It is a malignant poison, a dreadfully infectious and contagious disease. It is the real “pestilence that walketh in darkness,” and “the destruction that wasteth at noonday.” It destroys the bodies, minds and souls of mankind. We

have seen the man of noblest physique rejoicing in the fulness of vigor, yet by and by wasting away and finally wrecked beyond remedy by debauchery and sin. We have seen the brightest intellect, giving promise of high distinction and abundant usefulness, ruined by sin and dissipation, every noble faculty paralyzed by self-indulgence. Such was the case of a young man of the highest mind that I remember ever to have known. Sin has too often changed the high-spirited man into the groveling vagabond, the polished gentleman into the vulgar buffoon, the refined lady into the miserable shrew or the pestilential harlot. Sin impoverishes households; it breeds disease, wrecks bodies, ruins character, and ultimately leads to the destruction of body and soul forever. Such awful results are all about us, and we are bound to see them if we observe human life at all.

The story is told of an Italian painter, that when once he saw a little boy of exquisite beauty and loveliness, he determined to paint his portrait and exhibit it as representing his ideal of beauty and goodness. He resolved also, if ever he should find a human being in absolute contrast to this child he would paint his portrait also, and exhibit it beside the other as representing his ideal of wickedness and sensuality. Years afterwards, in traveling in a distant country, he saw in prison a man of frightful appearance, with the face of a demon, and his whole body reeking with vileness. In carrying out his former resolution he executed a faithful likeness of the hideous face and form of this outcast, and hung it beside the picture of the innocent and beautiful child. The painter's dream was now realized; the antipodes of the moral universe were displayed on the walls of his studio side by

side. But imagine his astonishment when he discovered later on that the two portraits were of the same person! That loathsome wretch was once that innocent and charming child! It is said that the two portraits may still be seen side by side in a Tuscan picture gallery, conveying to all who behold them the solemn lesson of the fearful destructiveness of sin.

It seems desirable now to specify some of the prominent kinds of sin that are slaying the souls of mankind. First of all, there is culpable ignorance. Multitudes of people are willingly ignorant of God, of themselves, of the Scriptures of divine truth, of the Christ who redeemed them with His own precious blood. They shut themselves away from a knowledge of God's character—his holiness, justice, goodness, truth, power, love and mercy. They do not recognize their obligations to serve God. They have no clear idea of the great salvation provided for them through the sufferings and death of the Son of God, nor of the awful consequences of neglecting so great salvation. They have no adequate knowledge of themselves, of their deceitful and desperately wicked hearts, and of their lost condition as alienated from God. Perhaps they congratulate themselves on being wise and rich and independent, having need of nothing, while in truth, like the Laodiceans, they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked (Rev. 3:17). They are not idiots, nor necessarily feeble-minded; nor are they without opportunities of knowing the provision that God has made for their salvation. They are wilfully blind, refusing to listen to the voice of the Spirit speaking to them in a multitude of ways. Some of these

spiritually ignorant men are well educated and rank high in the list of teachers, philosophers and scientists. A recent writer applies to them the name "agnostics," and describes the agnostic as "one who doesn't know whether there is a God or not; doesn't know whether he has a soul or not; doesn't know whether there is a future life or not; doesn't believe that anyone else knows any more about these matters than he does; and thinks it a waste of time to try to find out." I dare say such persons belong to the class described by the apostle Peter: "Scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished; but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Pet. 3:3-7). May God save us from such ignorance!

Not merely by ignorance are many precious souls destroyed, but also by apathy, indifference, carelessness, unconcern. There is a class of persons who cannot be properly called atheists, infidels, skeptics, or scoffers, and who are not regarded as immoral, but who knowing their duty live in utter disregard of it. Some have schooled themselves to complete indifference, while others by repeated refusals to yield to the claims of their Maker have become callous and unconcerned. Not taking time to reflect, they fail to appre-

ciate their danger. They have resisted or slighted the appeals of the Holy Spirit so often without apparent damage, that they think religion a small matter and the neglecting habit has become second nature. They are indulging themselves in ease and spiritual idleness, presuming upon the mercy of God and vainly imagining that a better opportunity will come by and by. They act as if their life, instead of being brief and uncertain, would stretch through a thousand years of appeal and privilege. O Christian men and women, cannot something more be done to arouse these careless ones? They are sleeping on the very brink of eternity. Like Jonah, they are fast asleep while the ship is tossed by giant billows and death is staring them in the face. Oh, that some one might call with mighty voice: "What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God" (Jonah 1:6). Let the appeal of Paul be urgently pressed upon every drowsy soul: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. 5:14). Let God's people sound the alarm of "Danger ahead, awake!"

Many more are being slain by undue love of the world. By "the world" I mean that which pertains to the earth—its various interests, its business, pleasures, riches and honors. Many of both sexes and various ages are wholly wrapped up in these things of time and sense. Their attention and affections are absorbed in the things that perish in the using, to the exclusion of eternal interests. They are not only in the world, but they are essentially of the world. Some are racing after money, some are striving for such honors as men can bestow, and vast multitudes are bent only on worldly pleasures. Behold the theatre, the ball-room, and the other

numerous haunts of carnal diversion, and see what multitudes are flocking to them! Only the Omniscient One knows how many souls have been kept away from Christ by worldly amusements, and how many Christians have lost their religious fervor and vitality under the enticements of these places of temptation.

There are those also, not a few, who are being slain by their ungodly appetites and lusts. Many men are completely enslaved by their passions. Not more surely is the vulture attracted by the carcass than are they by things that appeal to their evil propensities. Their motto is: "Let us eat, drink and be merry." To gratify themselves is the chief object of endeavor. They delight in vulgar jokes and songs, filthy conversation, and all manner of revelry. Within their hearts are lurking such things as the apostle specifies as "works of the flesh"—"adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like" (Gal. 5: 19-21). And the Master Himself says that "out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness" (Mark 7: 21, 22). No wonder that men whose hearts and lives are thus described are fast being numbered with "the slain of the daughter of my people."

But there are two conspicuous appetites, world-wide and destructive, to which I wish to call special attention. The first of these is the appetite for intoxicating drink. This insidious appetite is doing terrible work in all lands, destroy-

ing old and young, rich and poor, prince and peasant, learned and illiterate, of every race and complexion. Aside from the evils entailed upon society, the family and the individual in this present world, the drink habit leads to the damnation of the soul. In his First Epistle to the Corinthians the apostle Paul classes the drunkard with adulterers and thieves and other vile sinners, who shall not "inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:10). This of itself is enough to awaken every true Christian's sympathy, and to enlist his earnest efforts to deliver those who are enslaved by strong drink. Many of these are men possessing noble traits of character, and if the bondage of rum were shaken off might be ornaments to society, shining lights in the world, and bright stars at last in the glorious galaxy of the skies. I pity from the depths of my soul the man who has lost his self-control, and become a slave to this appetite; and so far as ability and opportunity allow I would gladly do my best to avert the impending ruin of his immortal soul.

Having lived in various towns and villages where liquor was sold, I have been asked quite often whether or not I had been disturbed by the drunkenness and revelry that occurred in those communities. While the mere noise of revelry never caused me an hour's loss of sleep, yet I have often been greatly disturbed even to sighing and tears as I have thought of the wreck and ruin inflicted upon the bodies, minds and souls of those who were surrendering themselves to the power of drunkenness. I have lain awake at night thinking of the broken-hearted mothers, wives, daughters and sisters, whose hearts have bled with grief on account of the debauchery of those who were dear to them, and whose utter ruin

perhaps was near at hand. But on such occasions my chief sorrow has sprung from the thought of the drunkard's final doom in the "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Could I speak face to face with all the drunkards of the land, I would warn them of the fate that lies before them, and earnestly entreat them to burst the fetters with which devils are dragging them to the sides of the Pit. I would entreat them for the sake of their loved ones at home, whose hearts are torn with grief on their account. I would implore them for the sake of their own immortal souls to abandon this soul-destroying habit. I would say to those who have never handled the wine cup, touch it not; to those who have tasted I would say, taste it not again, for it is a bad example. To those who have already gone to excess I say, quit it at once before the evil habit is fastened upon you. Men do not become drunkards at once, and no man ever became a drunkard by abstaining entirely.

To Christian men and women I would say, let us help these endangered ones to quit the evil habit of drink. Pray for them, and use every effort to drag them from the gulf that yawns before them. By the right use of the ballot, and in every other righteous way, let us seek to remove the sources and places of temptation. How can any child of God be content to remain unconcerned and inactive while the emissaries of rum are carrying on their dreadful work at our very doors!

The other appetite that I would specially raise a warning against is covetousness, or avarice, the love of money. I verily believe that the greatest sin in the world, the sin that does the most harm, lies in the greedy pursuit of money and

the selfish hoarding of it. If a visitor from another world were to suddenly drop down into our modern life and observe it for awhile, he would surely conclude that the chief end of mankind is to amass wealth. To very many of our fellow creatures gold is their god. To make money they will go to any extreme, and they care little as to how it comes if they can only get and hold it. They scruple not to violate the laws, to cheat the government, to take advantage in trade, and hesitate not to sacrifice truth, right and justice in the attainment of their ends. Many a man will resort to all sorts of tricks and sacrifice every principle of righteousness, in order to get a petty office that pays a few hundred dollars salary. For money there are men who will sell, not only their votes, but even their souls. And it is a sad fact that covetousness is not confined to the outside world, but is often seen in the church, both in the pulpit and in the pew. Even some ministers—let us hope that their number is small—are not asking where they can do the most good, but where can they get the largest salary. Not a few church members feign poverty, and hide their narrow-hearted selfishness and covetousness behind the screen of necessity, which soon disappears when their own interests and pleasures are involved.

The apostle Paul struck the tap-root of human nature when he said: "The love of money is the root of all evil;" or as the Revised Version has it: "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Tim. 6: 10). He gave covetousness its proper classification when he called it idolatry and placed it in closest companionship with vilest vices. How many immortal souls have been slain, how many are being ruined today, directly or indirectly, by this ungodly

greed after gain! It is the hidden mainspring that runs many soul-destroying machines, such as gambling-saloons, brothels and similar dens of vice. It is the chief engine that is driving the machinery of the liquor traffic, in both wholesale and retail departments. Is not this the reason why those who are engaged in the manufacture and sale of strong drink are so sensitive? It is well said that a man's purse is connected with one of his most sensitive nerves, and that to touch it is sure to make him wince.

But in saying these things I would not be understood as cherishing ill-feeling against those who are thus erring, but to be influenced rather by love for their souls. Were I seeking popularity I would let such persons and their practices alone, and confine myself to preaching a "smooth gospel." My hostility is not against them as individuals, but against their business. Many of them are kind-hearted, generous fellows, but their trade is doing only evil, and that continually. I would ask such persons: What need is there for your business? What good do you do? Are you helping forward any of the interests of your fellow men—whether commercial, social, political or religious? Rather, are you not doing that from day to day which desolates homes, destroys fortunes, makes widows and children penniless, breaks the hearts of the innocent, and ruins the souls of those who come directly under your influence? Let every one to whom these questions bring conviction of wrong-doing remember that there is mercy for the sinner who turns from his sins and seeks the pardon of an offended God. The prophet voices the Divine mercy when he says: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his

thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7). "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18). And the apostle Paul says: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. 1:15). Best of all, the Saviour Himself declared concerning even the vilest sinners: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

Seeing then, my brethren, how the souls of our fellow men are being slain in these and many other ways, how can we sit unmoved? Is it not enough to awaken our sympathy? Either we do not feel the reality of these things, or do not value the souls of our fellow men, or do not love the Christ who died to save them as we ought to love Him; or else we could not refrain from weeping with the prophet over "the slain of the daughter of my people." If our neighbors were suffering from some temporal calamity, such as pestilence or famine, how it would stir our souls and cause us to put forth every effort for their relief. How much more deeply stirred, then, ought we to be when we realize that there are souls all about us that are in direst peril of eternal ruin. Surely our sympathies should be so aroused as to wring from our aching hearts the cry of the prophet: "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" Oh, the carnival of death!

It is enough to break a heart of adamant, and to force tears from the eyes of the most hardened sinner. What more can I say or do?

“My God! I feel the mournful scene,
My bowels yearn o’er dying men;
And fain my pity would reclaim,
And snatch the firebrands from the flame.
But feeble my compassion proves,
And can but weep where most it loves;
Thine own all-saving arm employ,
And turn these drops of grief to joy.”

VII.

THE ALL-IMPORTANT QUESTION

What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?—Mark 8: 36, 37.

HERE is a question proposed for our consideration, a sum to be worked out. No doubt, among my readers there are some cool and calculating heads, both old and young, who, if dollars and cents were concerned, would be ready listeners and diligent students of what I have to say. But a matter of far greater importance than silver and gold demands your consideration.

I have read a little in history, ancient and modern, and have delved a little in the sciences, in philosophy, and in art; but I have never found a question to be compared with this. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, Newton and Bacon, Euclid and Kepler, Napier and Davies, and many others like them, in all their deep researches after mathematical, philosophical and scientific truth, never discovered a proposition fraught with half the significance to the human family as the one before us. It is a problem in profit and loss, to use the terms of the mathematician. Our Saviour states it in a twofold form: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

First, then, let us take the question in its former phrasing—that of gaining the world and losing the soul. After the manner of the business man or the arithmetician, let us sum up the gains and the losses, note the contrasts, and balance the account. What does the man really gain who gains the whole world? It is generally conceded that these gains consist principally of the riches, pleasures and honors of this present life. I shall not stop to estimate how large an amount of these a man may really get, nor to what a height they may elevate him in his own esteem or in the opinion of his fellow men. But granting for the moment that he can gain all these in their fullest measure, I would inquire into their nature and value.

At the very best this gain is only temporary. The riches of the world soon take to themselves wings and fly away. Its pleasures are transitory, its joys soon end, its honors fade and perish. Not one of them can be carried over into eternity. The records of human observation declare that “to-day we live, to-morrow we die.” In the graphic language of the patriarch Job, our “days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle.” The Bible compares this mortal life to the grass, to a shadow, to a handbreadth, to a tale that is told. “As for man,” says the Psalmist, “his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more” (Psa. 103: 15, 16). “The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away” (Psa. 90: 10). These facts are patent to the most casual observer.

Again, are not these riches, pleasures and honors unsatisfactory? The pursuit of these objects is often marked by features that mar the seeker's happiness. Toil, anxiety and suffering are necessary concomitants of such a quest. The cares which riches induce, the responsibility that honor brings, the painful reactions that often follow the gratification of the appetite for pleasure, all unite to prove them incapable of rendering perfect satisfaction. The rich man may have a table laden with dainties, and obsequious servants to do his bidding, but when disease grips him and appetite fails, his material abundance is powerless to give him pleasure. Did you ever know a man to be satisfied with riches, however large the sum, or to be contented with the honors and pleasures that were heaped upon him? Ask the gluttons, inebriates and libertines, who revel in their lusts, if they are satisfied. Inquire of the millionaires and multimillionaires, ancient and modern, and the world-conquerors like Caesar, Alexander and Napoleon, if wealth and conquest made them happy. Alexander the Great, when he had conquered the world, wept because there were not other worlds to conquer. Napoleon, though he had ridden in triumph over Europe, was insatiable and far from happy. Human history shows that men are never satisfied with the honors that come to them. The most successful general of the Civil War, though crowned with the highest military honors and twice chosen President of the United States, was not satisfied, but aspired to a third term in the presidential chair.

Suppose a man could stand upon some mountain peak, and with the most powerful telescope look out upon the

earth as far as sight would go, and know that all these broad acres were his own. Suppose him to be surrounded with every comfort that body, mind and heart could wish, covered with greatest honors, surpassed by no warrior, ruler, orator, statesman, poet, painter, or other man of distinction. Think of him as subject to no pain of body, no anxiety of mind, with every want satisfied, and every imaginable comfort, except the religion of Christ. Suppose, moreover, that he is permitted to live in the vigor and strength of manhood's prime in the enjoyment of these advantages for a thousand years. Tell me, of what value would all these things be to him, if at the end of the last day of his thousand years of self-indulgence he must die, leave all his riches, honors and pleasures behind, and lose his own soul? What has he gained? The things to which he gave his life cannot allay the pangs of death, nor prepare for him a home in heaven. His loss is utter and without remedy.

It is in order to inquire next, What does a man lose when he loses his soul? First of all, he loses all the pleasures of religion in this life. The apostle says that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8). In the process of losing his soul a man forfeits that peace of conscience, that tranquility of mind and soul, which one enjoys when walking in the fear of the Lord and in the path of duty. He loses that calmness and resignation which the true Christian feels in the midst of cares and difficulties, temptations and sufferings. When danger threatens such a man he is uneasy, and when death impends he is overwhelmed with fear. Possibly he is callous, because he has hardened

his heart, ignoring the fact that "the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." In either case, no triumph awaits him, no happy anticipations of a brighter world. He has laid up no treasure in heaven, and his soul is poor indeed.

Necessarily such a person loses all the pleasures of the Better Land, the indescribable glories of that inheritance which is "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" for God's faithful ones. He loses the associations of heaven, the blessed communion of saints. He has no seat with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and the hosts of glorified saints, and with the ten thousand times ten thousand angels that wait around the throne. He is shut out from the sight of that glorious City "whose builder and maker is God." He cannot roam along the banks of that crystal stream which makes glad the City of God, nor walk the golden streets of the New Jerusalem. For him there is no harp nor crown, nor "song of Moses and the Lamb." For him there is no fountain of eternal youth and vigor, no immortal existence in that happy land—

"Where the rivers of pleasure flow o'er the bright plains,
And the noontide of glory eternally reigns."

But the loss of the soul does not consist chiefly in negatives or deprivations; it has a very positive side also. That is to say, it impoverishes the soul and dooms it to hell, a place of eternal punishment, in company with the Devil and his angels, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:46). The Scriptures, in speaking of

this dreadful place, use such expressions as these: "bottomless pit," "lake of fire and brimstone," "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night," "weeping and gnashing of teeth." Richard Baxter says: "As the enjoyment of God is the heaven of saints, the loss of God is the hell of the ungodly; and as the enjoying of God is the enjoying of all, so the loss of God is the loss of all. What a dungeon the earth would be, if it had lost the sun; what a loathsome carrion the body would be if it had lost the soul; yet these would be nothing to the loss of God!" As no one can comprehend God, so none can describe the loss of a soul devoid of God, shut up in hell. As "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," so it is true that no mortal mind can conceive the horrors of that "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

However, we may learn from the inspired records some things concerning the nature of this loss. It is said to be infinite in extent and eternal in duration. Jesus admonished his disciples: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28). Christ represents the King in the judgment scene as saying to the wicked: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41). The apostle Paul declares that those who "know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,

when he shall come to be glorified in his saints" (2 Thess. 1: 8-10). These solemn expressions cannot be explained away. The fire and brimstone and "the worm that dieth not" may be figures of speech, or they may not; but whether figurative or literal, they are designed to convey at least some conception of a terrible state of loss and agony. One thing is certain, the punishment is indescribably severe and has no end. Not only is the suffering endless, but it increases rather than diminishes as the ages roll on. "They shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them."

Note also that this loss is irretrievable, without remedy or hope of recovery. Once in hell, in hell forever. There is no repentance, no release, no escape, beyond the grave. Prayers and entreaties, groans and sighs, will find no response, for there remains no more sacrifice for sin.

"In that lone land of deep despair
No Sabbath's heavenly light shall rise;
No God regard your bitter prayer,
No Saviour call you to the skies."

Between the home of Lazarus and the abode of Dives there is fixed a broad, impassable gulf. All the priests in the land may be assembled and all the mothers gathered; they may weep and cry and pray until their cheeks are blistered and their throats are parched, but all to no avail. The soul once lost is hopelessly gone, without a ray of light to mitigate the horrid gloom. I can conceive of the man who had lost one of his hundred sheep, or the woman who had lost one of her pieces of silver, searching for it with good hope of finding it; of that father whose younger son had abandoned his home

and wandered into a far country, fondly and anxiously hoping that some day he may return. I can think of that prodigal boy, though in poverty and rags, returning home with the hope that his father will receive him again; of a prisoner condemned and shackled with chains in his prison-house, yet hoping for pardon or reprieve; of a shipwrecked mariner tossed upon the angry waves, famishing with hunger and shivering with cold, and crying out with all his might for help, in the hope that his cries may be heard and that some friendly ship may come to his rescue. But who can conceive, in the light of the teachings of the Bible, that any messenger of mercy can find the lost sinner in perdition, and effect his rescue; or that such a soul amid the awful retributions of eternity can hope to win his way out into the glories of Paradise! He who knew the things that lie beyond the scope of our mortal vision sets forth the solemn truth in the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, when he represents Abraham in Paradise as declaring to Dives in hell: "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence" (Luke 16: 26). Add to this our Lord's other declaration concerning the wicked: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." From the solemn utterances of the Son of God there is no appeal!

Let us stop for a moment, then, to balance the account, and to answer the question of the text: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" The man who gains the whole world really gains nothing; the man who loses his own soul loses everything. It amounts to this in the end, however it may appear in the

beginning. It is all loss, no profit. And who can estimate the greatness of the loss? No human mind, not even the mind of an angel, is equal to the mighty computation. Only God Himself, who includes all things past, present and future in the grasp of His omniscience, can measure the loss of the soul that loses itself from the infinite glories of heaven by sinking into the infinite depths of hell.

We come back now to the text in the second form that it presents: "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" In studying Political Economy we learn that values are of two kinds—intrinsic or real, and exchangeable, and that the greater the intrinsic value the less is the exchangeable value. For instance, here is a fifty-dollar banknote. Its exchangeable value is large, but its real value is comparatively nothing, for it is worth no more than a piece of blank paper of the same quality and size. Compare the essentials of life, such as air, water and food, with things that are mere luxuries. Now if the essentials of life have so great intrinsic value and so little exchangeable value, how great indeed must be the intrinsic value of the life or soul itself! The conclusion is inevitable, that the human soul has no exchangeable value.

But again: we usually measure value by cost. This is another law of Political Economy. What has the soul cost God? His creative energy, His very breath; for it is written that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). And then, when man had forfeited his soul or life by disobedience, God to redeem it gave His only-begotten Son to suffer and die in his stead. So that, if it is possible to estimate the value of

the breath of God and the blood of His Son Jesus Christ, the soul of man might be valued also. In the words of James Montgomery's great hymn:

"What is the thing of greatest price,
The whole creation round?
That which was lost in Paradise,
That which in Christ is found:

"The soul of man, Jehovah's breath,
That keeps two worlds at strife;
Hell moves beneath to work its death,
Heaven stoops to give it life.

"God, to reclaim it, did not spare
His well-beloved Son;
Jesus, to save it, deigned to bear
The sins of all in one."

In view of the estimate placed upon the human soul by Him who made it and by Him who gave His own life to redeem and save it, ought not every man to estimate his soul at such a value that nothing could induce him to barter it away for things that perish in the using? We are told that Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, and that Judas Iscariot sold his Lord for thirty pieces of silver; but it remains to be seen what kind of a bargain you, my reader, will make—whether you will exchange light for darkness, hope for despair, happiness for misery, eternal life for everlasting death, endless glory and honor for shame and everlasting contempt.

It is said that an old minister made a visit to a young man whose father had been his most intimate friend. The young

man was a professor of science in a college, and had acquired considerable fame on account of some work in astronomy that he had done. In taking his leave after the interview, the minister said: "My young friend, you have gained much reputation by your astronomical calculations, and I wish now to suggest to you a problem for solution." And then he uttered in friendly but solemn tones the words of this text: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" How the problem was worked out by the brilliant young professor does not appear; but I could wish that all who read these words might be so haunted by this two-fold question of Christ, that they might seek the answer day and night until they find it to their everlasting welfare. Should you forget every word that I have said in trying to unfold the meaning of this great text, I beg that you will not forget the text itself. He that uttered it came down from heaven to reveal to men the way of salvation, and He has set before men the open door to a life of peace on earth and of eternal joy in the world to come. Also He has pointed out the broad road that leads to destruction, and sounded a solemn warning for all who are tempted to walk in it because it seems easy and profitable to the flesh. He sets before every soul the question of profit and loss, and leaves each one to decide the mighty issue for himself. Upon the decision eternal consequences hang. What shall your decision be?

VIII.

THE DESIGN OF BAPTISM

Unto what then were ye baptized?—Acts 19:3.

MUCH of the confusion that exists upon the subject of Christian baptism originates from mistaking its particular design. I think this case of the rebaptism of the twelve Ephesian disciples, in the incident connected with the text, sets forth very clearly its chief design. I use the word “design” intentionally, because it means to “point out,” to be the “sign” of a thing. Now what does water baptism point out? Of what is it the sign? My answer is: Holy Ghost baptism.

Before entering upon the direct proof of this proposition, let us glance at some of the various opinions that people profess to derive from the Bible on this subject. The Quakers, or Friends, assert that water baptism was never designed to continue in the Church of Christ any longer than while Jewish prejudices made such an external ceremony necessary. Hence they spiritualize it everywhere. I regard this view as being so unfounded as scarcely to require refutation. Yet I am inclined to believe that this view is to be preferred rather than the opposite extreme of laying undue stress upon water.

Another sect, known as Christadelphians, or Thomasites, affirm that the chief design of water baptism is to indicate the hope of Israel to come, or Christ’s coming to reign on the earth. This view, however, is so utterly without Scripture warrant that I deem it still less worthy of consideration.

That body of Christians, called Disciples of Christ, or followers of Alexander Campbell, teach that water baptism is for the remission of sins. Now, if this means a token of the remission of sins, a sign of it, we could in a measure agree with it. But if it is meant that one's sins are actually remitted in baptism, that the Holy Spirit is imparted thereby, so that no man is pardoned till he is baptized—that is, if baptismal regeneration is meant—we cannot agree with those who hold that view. They base their opinion chiefly upon three passages of Scripture. The first is this: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3: 5). Jesus had first said to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," and when the Pharisee was puzzled by this declaration Jesus affirmed the necessity of being born of water and of the Spirit, as quoted above. Now I think the Master designed to teach that the Spirit introduces us into the invisible or spiritual kingdom, and the water into the visible kingdom or church—the baptism with water being the symbol of baptism by the Spirit. It is not merely "see" the kingdom, but "enter into" it that is here set forth.

The second passage relied upon by the Disciples to support their doctrine is in the address of Peter on the Day of Pentecost: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2: 38). But Peter did not stop at that; he went on to say: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2: 39). What promise? Why, the promise of the

Holy Ghost. Pentecost was preëminently the day of the Holy Ghost, and on that day Christian baptism was administered for the first time. They were to receive baptism, not to remit their sins, but because their sins were already remitted in the name of Christ through the Holy Ghost. The water baptism was to them a token of Holy Ghost baptism.

The third passage is contained in Paul's explanation of the circumstances of his conversion as he addressed the mob in the temple area. He says that Ananias exhorted him: "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22: 16). But Paul had already received his sight, and had been filled with the Holy Ghost before he was baptized by Ananias, as is clearly set forth in the parallel account of his conversion (Acts 9: 17, 18). Nobody will assert that the baptismal waters wash away any man's sins, for that contradicts the testimony of our senses. The application of water is only symbolical—a sign of the work which has been wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit.

Another large and influential denomination of Christians zealously maintain that the chief object of Christian baptism is to represent the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. What then does the Lord's Supper represent? Does it not represent the sacrificial work of Christ, His death and burial and resurrection? It would seem plain that it does, in the light of the apostle's words: "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11: 26). Is it reasonable to suppose that Christ would institute only two sacraments, and make both of them represent the same thing? Besides, if this be the design of

baptism, where is it so stated in the Gospels or the Acts of the Apostles? In vain might one search the four Gospels in search of such a statement; and in the Acts there is not a single hint of any one being baptized in token of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

The doctrine now under examination is predicated upon two passages in the Epistles of Paul. The first is in Romans 6:4—"We are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The second is in Colossians 2:12—"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." If the context be examined these expressions are found: "Baptized into his death," "buried with him by baptism into death," "dead with Christ," "crucified with him," "planted together in the likeness of his death," "circumcised with the circumcision made without hands," "raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father," "risen with him through the faith of the operation of God." Now all these expressions set forth a spiritual crucifixion, a spiritual death, a spiritual burial, a spiritual circumcision, a spiritual planting, a spiritual resurrection. There is no actual death, nor burial, nor resurrection. If these passages contain any allusion to water baptism, it is only to represent a spiritual reality. No attempt is made here to discuss the mode of baptism—a topic reserved for treatment in another discourse. But I steadfastly maintain that these passages represent something vastly higher and better than water baptism.

Let us now come to direct proof of the proposition, that the design of water baptism is to represent the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is worthy of note that in the Old Testament, where the anointing with oil and the cleansing with water are spoken of, they are symbolic of the work of the Divine Spirit. For example, in First Samuel 16:13 it is said: "Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him (David) in the midst of his brethren; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward." A kindred passage is in Isaiah 44:3, where Jehovah says by the lips of the prophet: "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." In similar vein God speaks by the prophet Ezekiel: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my spirit within you" (Ezek. 36:25-27). To these I may add a passage from the Gospel of John, in which Jesus refers to the "scripture" as written by the prophet Isaiah: "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly (or from within him) shall flow rivers of living water." Then John explains the meaning of this promised "living water," saying: "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:37-39).

When we come to the New Testament, the proof that water baptism was designed to represent particularly the baptism of the Spirit is both abundant and conclusive. It is true that, in a general sense, it includes the work of the Father and the Son, as well as of the Holy Spirit. This is seen in the language of our Lord's charge to His disciples after the resurrection: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28: 19, Am. Rev. Ver.). But again I repeat, this baptism with water was designed especially to represent the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Proceeding with the proof, I call attention to the declaration of John the Baptist as recorded in Luke 3: 16—"I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." To like purpose is the passage in John 1: 33, where the Baptist says: "He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." Before His ascension Jesus said to His disciples: "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. For John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Luke 24: 49; Acts 1: 5). Accordingly, on the Day of Pentecost the apostles and their fellow disciples in the upper room "were all filled with the Holy Ghost," and the people witnessed the fulfilment of the prophecy of

Joel and the promise of the Risen Lord. To the assembled multitude Peter proclaimed Christ, the crucified One, as risen from the dead. Under the preaching many were convicted by the Spirit and cried out: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" To this appeal Peter responded: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2: 37, 38, 41). With this enduement the disciples went forth and preached the word everywhere, the Lord working in them and in the people, producing wonderful and glorious results.

Now look at the account given in the eighth chapter of Acts concerning the reception of the gospel by the Samaritans: "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. . . . Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8: 5, 14-17).

Refer again to the case of Saul of Tarsus, under conviction of sin at Damascus, his eyesight taken from him for a season, waiting and praying for relief. The Lord sent a godly man named Ananias to bring him a message of cheer. "And

Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized" (Acts 9: 17, 18).

Consider also that remarkable transaction in the house of Cornelius the centurion at Cæsarea, as related in the tenth chapter of Acts. Peter had gone at the summons of Cornelius, and had spoken the gospel message to him and his household. Then the record says: "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 10: 44-48). Subsequently Peter explained the occurrence to the brethren at Jerusalem, using these significant words: "As I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 11: 15, 16).

Could anything be clearer or more to the point than these examples? But to fasten the truth still more securely let us recall the dealing of the apostle Paul with the twelve men

at Ephesus—"certain disciples," to whom he put the question, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism" (Acts 19:2, 3). Then after a brief explanation of the design of John's baptism, "they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (verse 5). That is, they were rebaptized in the name of Christ, John's baptism not being sufficient; "and when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied" (verse 6).

The Holy Spirit is mentioned explicitly fifty-one times in the Book of Acts, and the book might well be styled "The Gospel of the Holy Ghost." Christ never baptized any one with water (John 4:2), but He did baptize with the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures do not teach us to pray for the baptism of water, nor even for the baptism of the Father or the Son; but they do teach us to pray for the baptism of the Holy Ghost. This is the "one baptism" of which Paul speaks in Ephesians 4:5. It is the free gift of God to all who sincerely desire it. Wiser than Solomon is he who earnestly seeks to be baptized with power from on high. May every sinner pray for the Spirit whose office is to convict men of sin, of righteousness and of judgment! May every child of God receive the baptism of the Spirit, in order to a deeper knowledge of Christ and a greater love for Him! May this great gift come upon all the saints of God, to bear witness to their sonship to the Heavenly Father, causing each one to realize that he is an heir of God and a joint-heir

with Christ. What is water baptism worth without this spiritual baptism of which it is the symbol? The greatest preacher that the world ever saw did not baptize with water, but He did baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Moses must see the burning bush; the Israelites must have for their guidance the pillar of fire; Elijah must have the fire of the Lord to consume the sacrifice, and he must mount to heaven in a chariot of fire; Isaiah must have his lips touched with a live coal from the altar of God; and the apostles of Christ must be electrified with the tongues of flame that symbolized the presence of the Holy Ghost. Oh, for this greatest of all baptisms, the baptism of the Holy Spirit of the Living God!

IX.

THE MODE OF BAPTISM

Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.—Matt. 28: 19.

THE subject here to be discussed is one that has occasioned much controversy in the Church. My aim in bringing it forward at this time is not to provoke dispute, nor merely to offset the teachings of those who believe in immersion as a mode of baptism. But I do undertake to answer those who hold that only immersion is baptism, and I do this for the instruction of my own people. The fact that the subject of baptism is given so little prominence among Methodists is explained by their indifference to the mode, believing that all current modes are valid, and also by the greater spiritual issues in which our preachers and people are interested. But sometimes our silence is misconstrued and used to our disadvantage, as if we had no sound arguments to sustain our belief and practice. Let it be understood, then, that I shall direct my remarks, not so much against immersion as a valid mode of baptism, but against the doctrine that no other mode than immersion is valid and allowable. While disclaiming any wish to offend those who hold the opposite view, I make no apology for presenting my own view as strongly as possible.

First of all, then, it is necessary to answer the question: "What is Christian Baptism?" A clear definition of the terms used is absolutely essential to the discussion of any subject. Our church catechism defines baptism as "an outward and visible sign of an inward, spiritual grace." I prefer, however, a more strictly logical definition, such as this: Baptism is a sacrament, in which water is used as an emblem of the purifying or cleansing influence of the religion of Christ upon the human heart, and especially as applied by the Holy Ghost. Is this a true definition? All will assent to it but immersionists, who would amend it so as to make it represent particularly "the death, burial and resurrection of Christ." According to their view, then, we have the two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper representing the same thing, as the Supper was instituted by our Lord to commemorate the sacrifice of Himself, His sufferings and death. Besides, if this is so, where is it stated in the Gospels, or in the Acts which records the administration of baptism immediately after the ascension of Christ? There are but two passages in the writings of the apostle Paul upon which they base this theory, and these we shall examine farther on.

The next question is: "How ought the water to be applied?" As to the mode the Scriptures are silent, and that fact ought to be sufficient to silence the advocates of one exclusive mode. But my contention is that the most natural and significant mode is pouring or sprinkling, both of which terms are included in the word "affusion." It is natural to look for a resemblance between the sign and the thing signified. In immersion the subject is applied to the water, instead of the water to the subject. On the other hand, the

Holy Ghost is uniformly represented as descending, shed forth, poured out, and by other similar terms. We are baptized "with the Holy Ghost" and "with water." The water is the instrument. Every shower of rain suggests the natural mode of baptism. The clouds pour out water upon the earth; hence affusion would seem to be the most natural and significant mode.

It is of no small significance that pouring and sprinkling were the modes of purification in familiar use among the Jews, and it was to Jewish disciples that the Master gave the command to go and baptize all nations. Kings and priests were consecrated by having the holy oil poured upon their heads. Lepers and those who had touched unclean things were made ceremonially clean by the sprinkling of the consecrated water. Nearly if not quite all the cleansings or purifications were performed by these modes. Let us appeal to Scripture. The earliest record of a consecration is in Genesis 28:18, where it is said that "Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it." A similar act is recorded of Jacob in Genesis 35:14. When the Israelites had determined to have a king, the prophet Samuel by divine direction took a vial of oil and poured it upon the head of Saul, the son of Kish, and thus consecrated him to the kingly office; and later when Saul had proved himself unworthy, the same prophet took a horn of oil and anointed David, the son of Jesse, to succeed him. (See 1 Sam. 10:1 and 16:13.) Other similar instances might be quoted, if necessary.

When Aaron was consecrated to the high priesthood the record says: "Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that was therein, and sanctified them. And he sprinkled thereof upon the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all its vessels, both the laver and its foot, to sanctify them. And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him" (Leviticus 8:10-12). Likewise the Levites, the priestly tribe were made ceremonially clean for their office. The record says: "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them. And thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them" (Num. 8:5-7). For the rites connected with the cleansing of lepers and of those who had touched a dead body, read the fourteenth chapter of Leviticus, especially verses 7 and 51, and the nineteenth chapter of Numbers, especially verses, 13, 18 and 20.

Turning now to the New Testament, we find that the Jews performed divers baptisms for cleansing purposes by sprinkling and pouring. The evangelist Mark says: "For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands diligently, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brassen vessels, and of tables (or beds)" (Mark 7:3, 4). That pouring was one of their modes of washing or baptizing their hands, is shown in Second Kings 3:11, where a servant is represented as saying to king Jehoshaphat: "Here is Elisha,

the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah." As to the tables, or beds, that the Jews in the time of Christ were accustomed to wash, or baptize, it would be unreasonable to suppose that they were immersed in water. Let us appeal to the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Leviticus of the New Testament. The writer says: "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ. . . For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged (or cleansed) with blood" (Heb. 9: 13, 14; 19-22). Let it be remembered that the thing I am trying to show just here is, that pouring and sprinkling were in familiar use among the Jews; and I have been thus particular in quoting the very words of Scripture, because in the interpretation of the sacred text much depends upon the customs and habits of the people to whom the words were first spoken.

That pouring or sprinkling (affusion) was the mode of baptism used by the apostles, may be argued from the various examples and instances that are recorded, especially in the Book of Acts. On the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost descended in so much power, after Peter had preached a sermon three thousand persons were baptized; yet Jerusalem, the city at which this took place, is situated on hills

where there is neither river nor lake. Even if it were practicable to immerse that great multitude in so short a time, is it reasonable to suppose that three thousand unconvicted sinners would come provided with a change of raiment in order that they might be immersed? As a matter of fact, the Scriptures do not anywhere give us an account of persons changing their clothing, or leaving the place of worship or conversion to be baptized. On the contrary, it appears in more than one case that the rite was administered in private houses. In the case of Saul of Tarsus, a man named Ananias was directed by the Lord to go to the street called Straight, find the house of one Judas, and bring the restoration of sight to Saul who had been stricken with blindness. The record says that after sight had been restored Saul "arose (literally, stood up) and was baptized" (Acts 9: 17, 18). The baptism of the Philippian jailer by Paul and Silas is a clear case. They did not leave the precincts of the prison, yet the jailer "was baptized, he and all his, immediately," "at the same hour of the night" (Acts 16: 33). The invention of a pool in the prison for the prisoners to bathe in, is a figment of immersionists' imagination. One more reference to the text of Scripture will help to illustrate the mode of baptism. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "All our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. 10: 1, 2). Yet the historian tells us that when the Israelites crossed the Red Sea the waters stood as a wall on either hand, and the people went over dry-shod. How, then, were they "baptized"? The answer may be found in Psalm 77: 17: "The clouds poured out water."

We argue again in behalf of pouring or sprinkling, because of the simplicity and adaptation of affusion to all times, places, persons and circumstances, and the frequent impracticability and inadaptation of immersion. The scarcity of water in some parts of the world, the extreme severity of some climates, the physical weakness or sickness of some subjects and some administrators, form insuperable obstacles to the universal administration of baptism by immersion. The gospel is designed for the whole world, including all climates, all classes of persons and all individuals; but if immersion alone is valid baptism, we have a seal or sign of the covenant, the initiatory rite of admission to the visible church, that is unsuited to many persons, in many climates, in certain conditions of health. According to this view, one may believe in Christ at the church, in the home, by the wayside, in the dead of night, even upon the couch of sickness or death, and yet cannot obey the Master's command to be baptized, because the circumstances forbid it. Over against these facts set this other fact, that baptism by pouring or sprinkling, like the gospel itself, is available at all seasons and in every place. As a noted writer says: "The mode of immersion is unfavorable to universal practice, while the other mode can be performed in any place, at any time and to any person; in the desert waste, or in the city full; by the side of Jordan, at the house of Cornelius, in Philippi's prison, by the penitent's cross, or on the bed of sickness and death; to the Greenlander on his icy mountain, or the African in the desert of Sahara; in winter and in summer, by night and by day."

Let us now answer some of the chief arguments advanced to justify immersion as the only valid mode of baptism, and at the same time reply to some objections that are offered against the other modes. First of these is the claim that the Greek verb "baptizo" means to immerse, or dip, and never means anything else. What lexicographer says so? Only Dr. Carson, who acknowledges that "all the lexicographers and commentators are against me in their opinion." Yet he declares that "lexicons are not ultimate authority," but "actual inspection" must determine the meaning of the word where it occurs. Dr. Ditzler in his work on Baptism names thirty-one lexicographers and "authors who speak lexicographically," who give other meanings and "sustain affusion as baptism." In classic Greek the word has a variety of uses, and frequently words lose their primary meaning and retain the derivative. But if "baptizo" means to immerse, and nothing else, let those who affirm it be held to their own definition. "Up" and "down" are opposites, and so are "immerse" and "emerge," both of which occur in that mode of baptism. But this definition of "baptizo" provides for the putting of the candidate under the water, yet fails to provide for taking him out. Yet after all, argument over the meaning of this word will never settle the question of the mode of baptism. Much of it is waste of time. The translators found it necessary to Anglicize the Greek word, and all efforts to substitute for it the word "immerse" have been dismal failures.

Another argument to be answered is this: "Jesus was immersed, and we should follow His example." Where in the Bible is it stated that He was immersed? The expres-

sions "went down into the water" and "went up out of the water" do not in the least refer to the act performed by the administrator in baptizing. In Matt. 3: 16 the record says: "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water." This was the act of Jesus, and not of John. It is nowhere intimated that John dipped Him into the water and raised Him out of the water. The Greek language has words to express the ideas of "putting under" and "raising up out of," but no such words are used in connection with any recorded case of baptism. Besides the prepositions used, the words "went down" and "went up" express motion to and from a place, without any reference to the mode. Christ was baptized to symbolize purity, and to induct him into the priesthood, according to the custom of the law. He is our "High Priest," and the Spirit of God, the cleansing agent, of which water is the emblem, descended on Him "like a dove." When He came to be baptized, John at first refused, saying: "I have need to be baptized of thee." But Jesus said: "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." What righteousness did He mean? The righteousness of the law, which required that the priest should be consecrated to his office when about thirty years old by "sprinkling the water of purifying upon him." Now sprinkling and pouring were the methods of consecration and purification in familiar use, as has been already shown. Both John the Baptist and Jesus were priests, and it seems quite natural to conclude that John consecrated Christ according to the mode in familiar use among the Jews. But it is asked, Why did He go to the Jordan? Because the people were gathered there to hear John's

message and to worship, and because there was an abundant supply of water, and running water is an emblem of purity. I have no doubt that John filled a horn with water and poured it upon the head of Christ. At any rate, we are not told just how the rite was performed, and the arguments in favor of affusion preponderate.

But, even if it could be established that Christ was immersed, that would not make immersion obligatory always and everywhere. The Judean climate was warm, and a mode that could be practiced there without harm could not be safely used in Greenland, Iceland, Maine, or even in Virginia. Besides, the mode of a thing is not essential to its existence, for there are different modes of doing the same thing. For example, in public worship some Christians kneel, others stand, and yet others sit. In the sacrament of the Lord's Supper some denominations kneel at the chancel, while others partake of the elements while sitting in the pews. No one will contend that the mode makes or mars the observance in these cases. Surely, if the mode of baptism had been essential, we should not have been left without specific instructions on the subject.

Therefore I say, while the example of Christ is obligatory upon us in some matters, the mode of His baptism, even if definitely ascertained, would not necessarily be so. Otherwise, as He was baptized in the Jordan, we would have to go to Palestine to receive the rite; or at least no body of water except a river would suffice. As He was not baptized until He was thirty years of age, we would have to wait until that age, in order to conform strictly to His example. And so the argument would require us to copy the method

of His baptism in all the minute particulars that could be ascertained.

In the Methodist Church the candidate is allowed to choose between the recognized modes of baptism, because we regard all the current modes as valid. On the other hand, those who insist on immersion to the exclusion of any other mode are taking an attitude that may be properly characterized as illiberal. I do not use any harsher term, but it is certainly illiberal for any one to say that I have not been baptized at all, because I have not received the rite according to his interpretation. And I am bold to say this, in view of what the apostle Peter says when he speaks of baptism as "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God" (1 Peter 3:21). If my own conscience is satisfied, no man has a right to be dissatisfied with me, or to deny the validity of my baptism.

In the effort to maintain the exclusive validity of immersion, the case of the Ethiopian eunuch is often cited, as mentioned in the eighth chapter of Acts. It is affirmed that here is a clear case of immersion. But note the place and the circumstances. The eunuch was traveling from Jerusalem toward Gaza along a desert road, when Philip the evangelist instructed and baptized him. Now, if there is any stream of consequence in that region of sand, travelers have never discovered it. There may have been a well, or at most a tiny stream. The account gives no intimation of delay in going to or coming from the water for the purpose of effecting a change of raiment. It is worthy of note, too, that the promise, "so shall he sprinkle many nations," is closely connected with the portion of Scripture in Isaiah which the

eunuch was reading when he called Philip to join him in his chariot. No doubt, this expression suggested to him baptism. Here, as in the baptism of Jesus, there is no statement as to how the water was applied. The baptism took place between the two acts expressed by the words, "they went down both into the water," and "when they came up out of the water," and no one can tell with certainty how the rite was performed. If it be insisted that the language used demonstrates the immersion of the eunuch, by the same token it proves that Philip was immersed also. But while we maintain that no one can say with certainty how the eunuch was baptized, it is clear that the preponderance of probability is in favor of some mode other than immersion.

Finally, some advocates of exclusive immersion lay great stress upon certain expressions in the Epistles of Paul, such as "we are buried with him by baptism into death" (Rom. 6:4), and "buried with him in baptism" (Col. 2:12). These are regarded as clear indications of immersion. But if water is referred to at all in those passages, what resemblance is there between immersion and the burial of Christ? He was laid away on a shelf in a sepulchre hewn out of the solid rock, and not buried in the ground. It would seem that pouring or sprinkling would better represent a burial, as we pour the earth into the grave to cover the casket. It is evident that in these passages we have a spiritual burial, a spiritual baptism, a spiritual circumcision, as the context shows. It is not "buried by baptism into water," but "into death." It is "circumcised with the circumcision made without hands," "planted in the likeness of his death," "dead

unto sin," "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father," "risen through the faith of the operation of God." In this connection one instance may be cited to show that pouring was used to represent a burial, when Jesus said of Mary: "In that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial" (Matt. 26: 12).

This discussion might be indefinitely prolonged, but I believe that enough has been said to convince the candid reader that immersion is not the only valid mode of baptism, and that affusion—that is, sprinkling or pouring—is the mode to be preferred. But after all, water baptism, whether with much water or little, can avail nothing without the baptism of the Holy Spirit, of which water is only a symbol. I agree entirely with an immersionist preacher whom I heard say: "The only difference I know in a baptized sinner is, that he was a dry sinner when he went in, and a wet sinner when he came out." The important question is, Have you received the Holy Ghost? Have you been made pure by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ? Have these hearts of ours been made fit temples for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit? Let us not lay so much stress upon the outward rite as to lose sight of the spiritual lesson it was meant to convey. Not much water or little water, applied in this way or in that way, is the thing that should chiefly concern us; but that faith which works by love and purifies the heart.

X.

DEDICATION OF CHILDREN TO CHRIST IN BAPTISM

And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.—Mark 10: 13-16.

LITTLE children held a large place in the estimation and affections of Jesus. He did not overlook them, nor regard them as unimportant members of society. Often He used them in illustrating truth and appealed to them as a standard of Christian character and disposition. If He wished to illustrate conversion, or to tell His disciples how the Kingdom of God was to be received, He said: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18: 3). "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein" (Luke 18: 17). When His disciples disputed as to who should be greatest in the Kingdom, He called a little child and set him in the midst

of them, saying, "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:4).

The incident of our text, unimportant as some men might regard it, was deemed of sufficient importance to be recorded in three of the four Gospels—those of Matthew, Mark and Luke. The Saviour is here portrayed in a most lovely attitude, and we may well pause and ponder the scene. When those fond mothers came with their babes and little ones, asking only that the Great Teacher might touch them, He responded at once to the appeal, not only touching them, but even taking them up in His arms, and putting His holy hands upon them with words of blessing. Painters have taxed their art in depicting the scene, but only the eye of Christian faith can appreciate its transcendent beauty.

The disciples, however, could see no reason why these mothers and their children should thrust themselves upon the Master's attention in the midst of the grave affairs that claimed His interest, and they could see no worthy end to be gained by His touching the little ones. They were utilitarians, and the question in their minds was: "What is the use of it? Go away with your crying children; what good can the Master do them? They are too young to understand His words." But Jesus did not share their view. Instead of reproving the mothers and turning away from the little ones, He rebuked the officious disciples, and commanded them not to interfere. "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." No doubt, He went back in memory to His own childhood, and remembered the tender regard of

His mother, of Joseph, and of others who had cared for Him in those early years. He knew that in His infancy He had been recognized as a member of the Jewish church by the rite of circumcision, and that afterwards He had been presented to the Lord in the Temple according to the customs of His people. And so He felt very tenderly toward those little children in whose behalf His blessing was asked by the fond hearts that loved them. Instead of forbidding, He encouraged the bringing of children to Him, and the all-sufficient reason that He gave was this: that the Kingdom of heaven belongs of right to the children, as well as to all childlike men and women everywhere.

What stronger reason do we need, then, for receiving and regarding little children as members of the flock of Christ? What greater encouragement do parents need to induce them to dedicate their little ones to the Lord, since Christ Himself teaches them to do so both by His precept and His example? Perhaps no devout Christian will deny that such dedication is a duty, but the thing that perplexes many is the mode or manner of the dedication. Nearly all of the denominations are in agreement in believing that the proper mode of child dedication is baptism. In this view are included Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Lutherans and Methodists, besides others not here named. The Baptists and some smaller bodies hold a different view. Now, we do not claim that Jesus baptized these little children or received them into the church; for baptism was not instituted or recognized as the seal of the covenant until after the resurrection and just before the ascension of our Lord. These were Jewish children, who

had already been admitted by circumcision according to the Abrahamic covenant, and so Christ recognized them as belonging to the Kingdom of God.

Why, then, should children at the present day be dedicated to Christ in baptism? The first reason lies in the fact that children have been recognized as belonging to God's Kingdom under all dispensations, whether patriarchal, prophetic or Christian. If they belong to the Kingdom, why are they not entitled to the sign thereof? They were specifically named in the covenant which God made with Abraham, and received the appointed seal of circumcision. This practice continued under the Mosaic dispensation, and on through the times of the prophets to the coming of John the Baptist and of Christ Himself. It even continued through the days of the apostles after the ascension of Christ, as we see in the fact that Timothy was circumcised by the apostle Paul to satisfy the scruples of the Jews. It is not without significance that one of the Ten Commandments was addressed in part at least to children: "Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Jehovah commanded the Israelites in regard to the commandments: "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children" (Deut. 6:7). The apostle Paul, in his Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, evidently includes the children as members of those churches; for in connection with exhortations addressed to parents, he admonishes their offspring in these words: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right" (Eph. 6:1). "Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well pleasing unto the Lord" (Col. 3:20). Now, if they were

members they must have been made so by receiving the Christ-given seal, which is baptism. The most significant fact is that Jesus declared: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," or, "to such belongeth the kingdom of God." He lived and died in behalf of children as truly as for adults, and they are included in all the benefits of His atonement. Why, then, should they not be entitled to the sign and seal of their inheritance? As none are excluded from the benefits of the atonement, except such as voluntarily exclude themselves by obstinate impenitence, so no one should be excluded from receiving the sign except those who exclude themselves. Infants cannot do this; therefore they are proper subjects for baptism.

The second reason for the dedication of children to God in baptism is close akin to that just mentioned, though not precisely the same. It lies in the fact that children were specifically embraced in God's covenant with Abraham, which was really the gospel covenant, and received the seal of that covenant from the time of Abraham till Christ Himself replaced it by another, which is less burdensome and is adapted to all classes and to both sexes. From receiving this seal they are nowhere prohibited, and the occasion of its reception was also the time when the child was named, just as children are named now when they receive the rite of baptism.

The institution of circumcision is recorded in the seventeenth chapter of Genesis in connection with the covenant that God made with Abraham. God said: "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God

unto thee, and to thy seed after thee" (Gen. 17:7). The covenant is still the same, only the seal is changed from circumcision to baptism. It is "an everlasting covenant." Accordingly, the apostle Paul speaks of Abraham as "the father of us all." To the Galatians he says: "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham" (Gal. 3:7-9). In the same chapter the apostle says: "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect" (Gal. 3:15-17). Continuing in the same line of thought, Paul says: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female (alluding to the fact that baptism is adapted to both sexes, whereas circumcision was adapted only to males); for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:26-29).

Do not these and similar passages show conclusively that the covenant which God made with Abraham is the same as the gospel covenant? If, then, children were entitled to the seal of the Abrahamic covenant, which was circumcision, are they not equally entitled to the seal of the gospel dispensation, which is baptism? Is the gospel of Christ less liberal in its provisions than the ancient covenant? Rather, is it not simpler, freer, more comprehensive, if there is any difference at all? If a change in the relation of children had been designed, would it not have been specified? The Jews were familiar with the custom of dedicating their children to the Lord, and carefully observed it; a dispensation of the gospel is made first of all to this same people; the covenant is the same, only the seal of it being changed to suit the larger mission of the gospel; there is no prohibition against applying the seal to any class among them. Under these conditions is it not perfectly natural for these Jews to regard their children as entitled to all the privileges they formerly enjoyed? The strange thing is that anyone should think a positive command necessary to the administration of baptism to children under the gospel dispensation. It should rather be taken as a matter of course that every child is entitled to the seal of the new covenant, which is practically identical with the old. In this connection I make reference again to the fact that under the old dispensation children were named when they received the sign of the covenant. When circumcision was first instituted, and Abraham was circumcised at the age of ninety-nine, his name was changed from Abram to Abraham. Isaac was named when he was circumcised, and so the custom went on down

the centuries. It was customary to administer the rite to infants when eight days old; and so John the Baptist received his name at his circumcision. The same thing was true of Jesus, as the record says: "And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus" (Luke 2: 21). The present custom of formally naming children at the time of their baptism accords with the ancient custom, and it seems to me right and proper that they should be left nameless until they are officially dedicated to God by name in holy baptism.

A third reason for the dedication of children by baptism is found in the fact that it is clearly comprehended in many of the general commands and promises of the Scriptures, even though children are not specifically named. This is particularly true in cases that refer to the baptism of the Spirit, of which water baptism is the sign. For example, God promised through the prophet Isaiah: "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring" (Isa. 44: 3). On the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out so abundantly, and many were asking what they must do, the apostle Peter exhorted them: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise (of the gift of the Spirit) is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2: 38, 39). On that day Christian baptism was administered for the first time in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; who will

dare to limit it to adults, and say that it did not embrace their children also, as well as their remoter posterity?

It is important to lay emphasis upon the commission that the Risen Christ gave to His disciples just before His ascension: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you" (Matt. 28: 19, 20). This is the order, then—make them disciples by baptizing them, and afterwards instruct them about the Kingdom of God. Refer now to the manner of the Jews in making disciples or proselytes. The fact is well sustained by reliable testimony, that they made their disciples (or proselytes) by constraining whole families, parents and children, to be circumcised, after which they instructed them in the duties and privileges of their new relationship. In like manner Christian disciples are to be made, baptizing both adults and children, and then imparting to them the instruction that their several needs may require. In harmony with this view our Lord's charge to Simon Peter on the shore of the Galilean lake after the resurrection may be aptly mentioned. Three times he asked that disciple: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Each time Peter affirmed his love for the Master. And then Jesus gave him the solemn charge, not only to "Feed my sheep," but also to "Feed my lambs." Surely His lambs are entitled to receive the sign of His covenant, as well as those who have passed into the experiences of maturer life.

A fourth reason for the dedication of children to Christ in baptism is found in the practice of the apostles and the early Fathers, as well as by the Church in every succeeding age.

The apostles baptized numerous families upon the acceptance of Christ by the head of the family. Is it reasonable to conclude that none of these families contained any little children? That the apostles administered baptism to infants is made clear by the concurrent testimony of the early writers and "fathers" of the Church. Any one who refuses to admit the validity of such testimony, if consistent, would have to reject also the external evidence in support of the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament books; for these depend upon similar testimony recorded by those who lived in the years immediately succeeding the apostolic age. Let us note what some of these witnesses say.

Justin Martyr, who wrote forty years after the apostles, in speaking of the members of the church, says: "Many persons among us sixty or seventy years, of both sexes, who were made disciples of Christ in infancy, continue uncorrupted." This statement implies that the persons in question had been made disciples (by baptism) while some of the apostles were yet living. Thus the practice in the days of the apostles is made clear by one of the earliest and most credible Christian writers.

Irenæus, a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the apostle John, wrote: "Christ came to save all persons who by him are baptized unto God: infants and little ones and children and youth and older persons."

Origen, who was born in the second century, and whose father, grandfather and great-grandfather are said to have been Christians, states expressly in speaking of original sin: "For this cause the Church received from the apostles an order to give baptism even to infants." Again he says:

"Baptism is given to infants according to the practice of the Church, when if there were nothing in infants that needed forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would be superfluous to them."

Cyprian, who was born in the second century, says: "Sixty-six bishops convened at Carthage, having the question referred to them, whether infants should be baptized before they were eight days old, that being the time for circumcision, decided unanimously that it was not necessary to defer baptism to that day."

Gregory Nazianzen, who lived in the fourth century of our era, said: "The whole Church practised infant baptism; it was not instituted by Councils, but was always in use."

Augustine, the great religious luminary of the fourth century, in his controversy with Pelagius who denied the doctrine of original sin, draws an argument in favor of that doctrine from the custom of baptizing infants, saying: "The whole Church has of old constantly held that baptized infants do obtain the remission of original sin by the baptism of Christ."

Pelagius, in defending himself says in his letter to Innocent: "Men slander me, as if I denied the sacrament of baptism to infants. I never heard even an impious heretic say they ought not to be baptized. For who is so ignorant of the evangelical writings as to have such a thought? Who can be so impious as to hinder infants from being baptized?"

Celestius, who sustained Pelagius, says: "We acknowledge infants ought to be baptized for the remission of sins, according to the rule of the universal Church, and according to the sentence of the gospel."

To these testimonies might be added that of Ambrose, Chrysostom, Jerome and others; but this is enough to show that infant baptism was practiced in the Church from the earliest times, even in the days of the apostles themselves. In making these quotations from the Church Fathers I would not be understood as endorsing all they say as to the virtue of baptism when administered to infants; my purpose is to make it clear from their testimony that infant baptism was known and practiced in the Church from the very beginning. No reliable history shows any instance of departure from this apostolic usage until the Anabaptists arose in the fifteenth century, except the modification proposed in the second century by Tertullian for prudential reasons, and the doubtful case of Peter of Bruys in the twelfth century. Now, then, if the baptism of infants did not originate in the times of the apostles, when and where did it originate? If introduced after the apostolic age, it would have been a great innovation, provoking wide comment and probably controversy. But for fourteen centuries, by the showing of the records, the custom prevailed throughout the Church, without controversy as to its apostolic origin and authority. We conclude, therefore, that it is both right and proper that children should be dedicated to the Lord in baptism.

It may be, however, that some one will ask: "What good does infant baptism do? Why should children be dedicated to the Lord in this way?" To such questions reply might be made by asking what good did circumcision do under the Old Testament dispensation? What good does baptism do when administered to adults? Does it wash away a single stain of sin? Is it not the badge of Christianity, the out-

ward sign of inward grace? But I will not evade the question by asking questions in return. Properly understood, there are many benefits arising from infant baptism. It tends to make parents recognize and realize their obligations to train their children in Christian knowledge and character. It places the child under obligations to live a Christian life, and opens the way for him to realize those obligations as he grows older and they are explained to him. I can think of few ceremonies more impressive than that in which parents consecrate their child at the altar of the Church, saying to the minister: "Take this child and dedicate him to the Triune God." If this act is performed with all sincerity and good faith, it will assuredly prove a lasting benefit to both parents and child. It is an act of confidence on the part of the parents, which will draw the approving smile of the Heavenly Parent. If the child should die in early life, it will afford them consolation to remember that he had been dedicated to the Lord. If they should die while yet the child is living, they leave public testimony of their belief in the religion of Christ, and their desire that their offspring should live a Christian life. In this connection I may be allowed to give my personal testimony. I believe that, next to the religious training which my mother gave me after my father's death, in obedience to the baptismal vows, the act of dedicating me to the Lord in baptism was the most important act she ever performed for me. Yes, I feel its obligations still resting upon me, and her blessing abiding upon my head. Methinks that if a mother can look down from heaven and smile approval upon her son, mine would say: "My son, I gave you to the Lord in your childhood, as Hannah gave Samuel; go and exhort other parents to do likewise."

Much more might be said, for the subject is far from being exhausted; but probably enough has been said to convince those who, without prejudging the case, have given this discussion a candid and impartial hearing. Finally, then, I urge parents to dedicate their children to the Lord in baptism, and to be faithful to the vows then publicly assumed. My firm conviction is that this is a high privilege in exact accordance with the divine word, that it is a course dictated by sound reason and true feeling, and that it will redound to your own advantage and to the everlasting benefit of your children. Even though some "disciples" may cavil and rebuke, as did the disciples of old when little children were brought to Christ, the Master will always say: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." Not only bring your children and consecrate them to the Lord, but be sure to consecrate or reconsecrate your own hearts and lives to Him, and then your joy will be complete. Come in the spirit of little children, and receive into your own hearts that grace which will build you up and make you wise unto salvation. Come with child-like simplicity and trust, remembering the Master's words: "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

XI.

OBJECTIONS TO INFANT BAPTISM ANSWERED

Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you.—Matt. 28: 19, 20, (R. V.).

THIS text, which contains our Lord's commission to His disciples when He was about to ascend into heaven, is presented at this time, not for the purpose of a full discussion of its several parts, but especially as implying the duty of including infants in the number of those who are to be baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity. I regard this great utterance of Christ as a distinct authorization of the administration of baptism to children as well as to those of riper years.

In presenting this special subject, I purpose in the first place to answer some of the objections to infant baptism that its opponents ordinarily bring forward. The removal of these obstacles will open the way for the presentation and reception of the truth.

One of these objections alleges that the child who has been baptized may become dissatisfied when he reaches adulthood, and desire to be baptized by another mode. To this it may be replied that, if the parents do their duty in training and instructing the child, this is not likely to occur. Furthermore, do we not have to do many things for our children

about which in their mature years they may be displeased? Many are not satisfied with their names received in childhood; are children therefore to be left unnamed until they are old enough to choose names for themselves? It sometimes occurs that persons reaching maturity are dissatisfied with the form of religion taught them in the parental home; shall they, therefore, not be taught any form of religion in childhood? Shall parents try to leave their children's minds blank and free from all religious prepossessions? If you try it, you will find that the powers of evil have not hesitated to write error and sin upon the pages of mind and heart. Hear what the Scriptures say: "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children" (Deut. 6:6, 7). "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6). "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). And, in the language of our text, "Go ye, . . . make disciples, . . . baptizing, . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." There is no escape from this responsibility.

Again, it is objected by some persons that children cannot understand the nature of baptism, and that therefore they should not be baptized. It may be replied that the same thing is true of many adults who receive baptism. Moreover, the Hebrew children could not understand the nature of circumcision, yet it was administered to them by divine command. Parents are obliged to do a great many things for their children, which the children at the time do not understand and cannot appreciate.

Still others object that, as children cannot believe, therefore they ought not to be baptized. But if inability to exercise faith excluded them from receiving baptism, the sign of the Kingdom, it would also exclude them from the Kingdom itself. For it is not only written, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," but also in the same verse, "He that believeth not shall be damned" (or condemned). Jesus declared that the Kingdom belongs to little children, and He died for them as well as for adults. If, therefore, they belong to His Kingdom and are embraced in the gracious provisions of the atonement, they are surely entitled to the initiatory rite of admission into that Kingdom. No one is excluded from these privileges except those who voluntarily exclude themselves by obstinate impenitence. Infants cannot do this; therefore, they are proper subjects for baptism.

Again, it is asked: "What need is there for the baptism of a child? What good does it do?" In reply let it be asked: What good does baptism do an adult? Does it wash away a single sinful stain? What good did circumcision do the children of the Israelites? What good did Jesus do to the little children when He took them in His arms, put His hands upon them and blessed them? They could not understand the significance of what He was doing. The apostle Paul asks: "What is the profit of circumcision?" And he answers, "Much every way," and then goes on to show it. So say we of the baptism of children. Who can tell what gifts of the Holy Spirit God may impart to both parents and children? Is it not reasonable to think that He will bless those who render obedience to His own ordinances? Remember the words of Peter on the day of Pentecost, as

he spoke to the people concerning the promised gift of the Holy Ghost: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off" (Acts 2: 39). Who can estimate the beneficent results in after years flowing from this consecration in childhood? Certainly if the parental obligation is fulfilled, it will prove a blessing both to parents and children. But even if parents forget their vows and neglect their duty, the simple fact of having been baptized will stand as a witness to remind its recipient in after years of his obligations to Christ. It will show him also that his parents did cherish at one time at least the earnest desire that their child should live a Christian life, from the fact that they put upon him in his childhood the seal of the Kingdom of God.

Furthermore, it is urged against the practice of infant baptism, that there is no positive command for it in the Bible. If this were admitted, it would still be true that there is no prohibition of it, as we should naturally expect would be the case if children were designed to be excluded from the rite. For, as we have seen, the Jews were accustomed to giving their children the sign of the covenant, which was circumcision; and when the gospel dispensation was introduced to these same people, with baptism instead of circumcision as the seal, why should they consider their children excluded from a privilege that they had always enjoyed? Manifestly, in the absence of a positive prohibition, they would practice infant baptism under the gospel dispensation. Moreover, do not the opponents of infant baptism practice many things for which they have no positive command in Scripture? Do they not hold conventions, associa-

tions, Sunday schools, missionary meetings? Do not some of them practice close communion, and regard the putting of a person under the water and raising him out of it as baptism? Are there not many things recognized by all Christians as right and proper, for which there is no positive authority in the Scriptures? Among these may be mentioned the observance of the first day of the week as the Christian sabbath, the holding of family worship, and the administration of baptism to women and their admission to the communion of the Lord's Supper. Suppose that the few incidental notices of the baptism of women had been omitted by the sacred writers, would it be fair to argue that therefore women should be excluded from baptism? There is no command on record for the participation of women in the communion; but will any one maintain from this fact that woman, who was "last at the cross and first at the sepulchre," is not entitled to meet with the brethren and commemorate the sufferings and death of their Lord and Saviour? From considerations such as these it may be legitimately concluded that the absence of a specific command to baptize the little ones is no sufficient reason for denying them the seal of the covenant.

Turning now from these objectors and their objections, let us note some of the considerations that combine to establish the divine authority of those who administer baptism to infants and little children.

Strong proof may be found in the history of the Church since the days of the apostles. Infant baptism was the practice of the universal Church from the very beginning. And at the present day it is practiced by the vast majority of Chris-

tian bodies throughout the world, the only exceptions being found in the Baptist denomination, and some smaller bodies more or less closely affiliated with it. The two great divisions into which the original Church separated about the middle of the eighth century—the Greek and the Roman Churches—require and practice infant baptism. The writings of the so-called Apostolic and Church Fathers contain many incidental allusions to the practice of this rite from the days of the apostles onward. Among these writers were Gregory, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Jerome, Pelagius, Augustine, Celestius, Fidus, Origen, Tertullian, Justin Martyr, and Iranæus who was a disciple of Polycarp, the intimate friend of the apostle John. The testimony of these men is conclusive as to the fact that infant baptism was the universal practice in the Church by apostolic command and example. Now, if it was not practiced in the time of the apostles, when and where did it begin? If introduced after the apostles were dead, so great an innovation would surely have provoked controversy. Yet for fourteen centuries we find in the history of the Church no denial that the rite was in current use, however much the writers may have differed as to the meaning and benefits of it. The inference is clear that the early Church was a unit in the practice of infant baptism.

Now let us go back still further, and notice the attitude of the apostles themselves in this matter. The apostles recognized children as belonging to the Kingdom of God, and it was their custom to baptize whole families when the head of the family became a believer. It would seem unreasonable to maintain that in none of these baptized households little children were included. Among the households mentioned

as receiving baptism are those of Crispus, Gaius, Stephanas, Lydia, and the jailer at Philippi. The adults were baptized, of course, on profession of their personal faith in Christ; but the little children would receive the rite upon the responsibility of their parents. This was in exact accord with the custom of the Jews, who in baptizing their proselytes included the children with their believing parents. It is a remarkable fact also, that in the progress of Christianity as related in the Acts and the Epistles, there is not a single mention of the baptism in their adult years of the descendants of Christian parents. Timothy, the son of Eunice and the grandson of Lois, both of whom were devout Christians, was familiar with the Scriptures from his childhood, and was circumcised by Paul; but there is no mention of his baptism, and that he must have received in his infancy. Along with these facts attention may be called to some expressions of Paul in his Epistles. In the admonitions that he gives to the members of the Ephesian and Colossian churches, he includes the children as members of the household of faith. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Obey your parents in all things; for this is well pleasing unto the Lord" (Eph. 6: 1; Col. 3: 20). Again he writes to the Corinthians: "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now they are holy" (1 Cor. 7: 14). By this he means that the children are ceremonially clean, or holy, and the clear inference is that, being thus holy, they are entitled to baptismal consecration in token of that fact.

From the doctrine and practice of the apostles let us go back to the teachings of Christ Himself. Note that He was received into the Jewish Church when eight days old by the sign and seal of circumcision. Consider carefully also that He plainly declared the relation of children to the Kingdom of God when He said: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God;" or as the American Standard Revision renders it, "to such belongeth the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14). In harmony with this are the words that He addressed to His ambitious disciples: "Except ye be converted (or turn), and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3). From these facts and quotations we see that He joined the Church in childhood, found children in the Church, and kept them in the Church; and where the apostles found their Master had left them they recognized their right to remain.

Of course, we do not claim that Christ Himself baptized any children, nor did He baptize any one else. Christian baptism was not instituted until after His resurrection, when He commanded the disciples in the words of our text: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." Consequently on the day of Pentecost, when the first administration of Christian baptism occurred, the apostle Peter not only directed the adult believers to be baptized, and promised them the gift of the Holy Ghost, but added also this statement: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." When Jesus com-

manded Peter, "Feed my lambs," did He not mean to include them in the directions that He afterwards gave to baptize and teach all who became pupils in the school of Christ?

Bishop Morris spoke wisely when he thus illustrated our text: Suppose you were to give your son or your servant directions to go out and pen the sheep; what would you think of him if he left the little lambs out in the cold, to be devoured by wolves? So when our Lord commands His apostles to make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them and teaching them His commandments, it accords with highest reason to believe that He meant the young as well as the old, the lambs of the flock, whose weakness calls especially for the shepherd's care. This is the Master's will concerning His little ones; let us be faithful helpers of the Good Shepherd in caring for the lambs of His flock. "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish" (Matt. 18:14).

ADDRESS
to
ALUMNI SOCIETY

Address to Alumni Society

JOHN BUNYAN AND THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

An Address Delivered Before the Alumni Society of
Randolph-Macon College, Va., June, 1886.



Fratres Alumni, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I rise before you to perform the part assigned me on this occasion. If perchance I should seem to preach or exhort a little, you will not be surprised, as that is my calling, and I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, even at Rome.

It is my purpose to hold up before you a portrait of one who has been aptly styled the "Prince of Dreamers," the illustrious author of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and to deduce some practical lessons of instruction and encouragement from the history of this remarkable man and his world-renowned work.

The first questions to be asked are: Who was John Bunyan? Where and when did he live? What did he do? Not that you never heard of him before, for it is likely that you learned his name in the nursery itself, but it may be that you have not taken time and pains to study his character. He was an Englishman who lived in the seventeenth century, during that stormy period of English history which was characterized by civil and religious commotion and the protracted struggle between arbitrary sovereignty and popular liberty, and which resulted in the execution of the infatuated Charles, and the restoration of liberty under

the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. Bunyan belonged to that glorious army of the Reformation, whose muster-roll contains the names of such pioneers of religious freedom as Wycliffe, Luther, Knox, Cranmer and others. And like them he had to encounter snares and difficulties and persecution such as the wrath of man could devise and the guile of devils suggest. In his pathway he met envy, hatred, slander and persecution, and faced them all with a martyr's heroic courage.

John Bunyan's parentage was exceedingly humble. He could not boast of an ancestry whose names were written with prefixes and suffixes of lordly titles and Royal Societies and learned institutions; nor could his family boast of deeds of martial glory such as grace the records of his own or our day, nor of ease and affluence. On the contrary, he was born to squalid poverty, in a family of inconsiderable rank among the poorer classes of the community. He was the son of a brazier or tinker, and himself became an apprentice to the same humble trade at Bedford, England. His schooling, like that of many whose names glow in the galaxy of great men, and whose words and deeds illumine the pages of history, oratory, science, literature, art and useful invention, was so limited as to scarcely enable him to read and write. But by dint of energy and self-application he rose to be an eminent preacher of the gospel, and the author of books of great value and usefulness, chief of which is that greatest and most popular of all allegories, the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Let this encourage those who may not be able to get such an education as they desire. In his early years he gave no indication of genius, his chief distinction being

that of a ringleader among the wild and mischievous youth of his neighborhood. No one thought of the ragged urchin—the “cursing, swearing, lying boy,” as he calls himself—as the future Christian hero, who was destined to win honor from unnumbered generations, and whose works would gain world-wide and imperishable fame.

At the early age of seventeen he enlisted in the Parliamentary army, and participated in the battle of Naseby and the siege of Leicester. Although his military career was short, yet it is apparent from his writings that he acquired no small acquaintance with the arts of war. This is seen especially in his description of the military garb of Christian in his combat with Apollyon, as elsewhere in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and also in his descriptions of the wars of Shaddai for the conquest of the town of Mansoul, as contained in the “Holy War.”

As to his first religious impressions, what we read of his youth does not show the influence of Christian parents instructing him in the ways of truth and virtue, and restraining him from vice; but like a full-fledged bird in the air, he seems to have winged his wayward flight at will, unrestrained save by the suggestions of a troubled conscience. Even in childhood he confesses to being moved by strange monitions and warned by frightful visions. From these causes, along with a pious wife's influence in after years, came his first religious impressions. It is probable that Bunyan attached too much meaning to dreams. Nevertheless it is true that many Christians can trace their convictions to dreams. Thus does God deal with man. Even while we sleep angelic messengers brood over us, admonishing us to

"flee from the wrath to come," or entreating us in the appeal, "Turn ye, for why will ye die?"

But there is a turning point in almost every life, a lull in the storm which subsides into a perpetual calm, or else bursts forth anew with tenfold fury. At such a point one's destiny is decided for good or evil, for weal or woe, for a memory that shall live, or perish with the fleeting breath. At this period in Bunyan's history we have now arrived. Self-confidence and outward conformity to the moral law had well nigh dragged him into the vortex of ruin. He saw no wickedness in his own heart, nor felt any need of a Saviour. A fearful presumption possessed him, from which he was aroused by overhearing a conversation among some godly women in his native town, concerning the evidences and joys of religion. At once he saw that, if theirs were the true standard, he himself was deceived. A strange uneasiness seized him, and he quaked with fear. The words of these pious women followed him in his daily labors until at last he resolved to seek their counsel. Advised by them, he betook himself to prayer and the study of the word of God, drawing nigh to the cross in penitence and faith; whereupon the burden fell from his heart and a season of calm assurance ensued. This, however, was of short duration, for there soon followed a season of doubt, more dreadful in its immediate consequences, if possible, than his former self-righteous delusion. He fell into despondency, and for two and a half years a stubborn conflict went on within. The Spirit of God suffered the great deep of his heart to be stirred. Evil desires, and even blasphemous thoughts, beset him; temptations of the direst nature harassed

him. This anguish of spirit preyed upon his vitality, his body became frail, and the strong laboring man became pale and wan as a sickly child. But in the midst of this protracted conflict he clung to the Bible. To quote his own emphatic words: "I was then never out of the Bible either by reading or meditation." Eventually the voice of inspiration proved a panacea for all his maladies. The clouds disappeared, his mourning was turned into joy, his spirit revived, and his body recovered its strength. So that the man, instead of being weakened either in mind or body, came out of this fiery trial like gold from the furnace, purified and ready for the Refiner's use.

Soon afterwards his ministerial life began, and he became a zealous leader in the Baptist church in Bedford. The glory of God was now the settled purpose of his life. After mature deliberation he buckled on the armor of the gospel minister, and devoted every energy of his soul to the accomplishment of the work. Meanwhile, like the apostle Paul, his own hands ministered to his support and that of his family. As a preacher his style was natural, simple, bold and vivid, earnest and zealous. Although not so entertaining as Baxter, he attracted to his ministry great crowds, who feasted with delight upon his words. In ecclesiastical polity his views were liberal and free from sectarianism, so that his masterpiece, the *Pilgrim's Progress*, bears no mark of the peculiar tenets of his denomination. His catholicity was broader than the church of his choice. He was far in advance of his age; and in fact, he still leads the van of his church for its emancipation from restricted communion, followed by Robert Hall, Charles Spurgeon and other kindred spirits.

Yet his mild course did not protect him from the tongue of slander, nor shield him from the darts of persecution. The royal priesthood watched with a jealous eye, and marked him for its victim. For no crime save that of his broad and liberal views, and of non-conformity to the Established Church, he was arrested, and without the privilege of trial was cast into prison. One count in the indictment was this: "That John Bunyan of Bedford had devilishly and perniciously abstained from coming to church, and was a common upholder of several unlawful meetings and conventicles."

This brings us to that period of his life in which he shines with greatest splendor, where the man of nerve and will and unflinching devotion to the truth may be seen. Liberty was now offered him on the condition that he would desist from preaching. Little did his persecutors know the metal of which this man was composed. He resolutely replied: "If I were out of prison to-day, I would preach the gospel to-morrow by the help of God." While, like Daniel and Paul, whose writings he studied so carefully and quoted so often, he was pliable in matters that were indifferent, yet in questions involving right and wrong he was as unyielding as the anvil under the hammer's stroke, or as the cliffs against which the billows beat in vain. In matters of principle he could not be neutral, or yield to any compromise. He was not a man of policy, the bane of Church and State. He was no fawning flatterer, no cringing sycophant, no wily politician who will espouse either side of a question as interest may dictate. Rather was he a man of backbone, with every joint fortified as with steel. Such a man prefers

death to wrong-doing. Consequently, as Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the children of Israel than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, so Bunyan preferred life-long imprisonment, or even martyrdom at the stake, rather than to renounce the truth. Oh, that the world were filled with such heroes!

But his personal sufferings were the smaller part of his distress. His mind dwelt upon a sadder sight. Said he: "It is like pulling flesh from my bones to part with my wife and poor children. Thou must be beaten, must beg, must suffer hunger, cold, nakedness and a thousand calamities, though I cannot now endure the wind should blow upon thee. But yet I must venture you all with God, though it goeth to the quick to leave you." A man of feebler nerve could not have rallied under such misfortune. But his piety was too deep, his Christian fortitude too strong, to be subdued by even this heavy calamity.

Every honorable effort was exhausted for his release; but although in 1661 a general pardon was proclaimed by the king, Bunyan was still kept in prison. At the next Court of Assizes his wife, Elizabeth Bunyan, appeared in his behalf. But the judges, except Sir Matthew Hale (who gave her but feeble support), were deaf to her pitiful pleas and entreaties, which appear even at this day to have been eloquent enough to touch the most obdurate heart. Even now one can scarcely read the account without tears for her distress and indignation toward the cold-hearted judges. Meanwhile Bunyan himself was not idle. Although such afflictions would have disqualified most men for work, he was not disheartened and his energies were not paralyzed. His faith

and his love of the truth, which had been already confirmed by spiritual agony, were now made the more intense and steadfast by bitter persecution. Instead of lying down in idleness and bewailing his unhappy lot, he acted like a mature Christian and made misfortune the occasion of a firmer trust. "The wounded spirit, the altered scene, and seclusion from society, had each its wholesome influence. He applied himself with the energy and concentration of a startled man." If he could not ply his accustomed craft, he contributed to the support of his family by making tagged laces; and if his mouth was sealed, his mind was untrammelled, and he preached by his writings to generations unborn then, and other generations even now unborn. As one writer says: "What other men learn from books, he, with the aid only of his Bible, spelt out and put together by the light from heaven that irradiated his darkness. He was educated by this severe process of thought." Under the heaviest afflictions his imagination seemed to glow with celestial fire.

This brings us to speak of his immortal allegory, the *Pilgrim's Progress*—of its origin, its beauty, its popularity and its usefulness. In the wilderness "den" where he slept, separated from his family and friends, he dreamed and penned this great allegory delineating the progress of a pilgrim from this world to that which is to come. In addition to the story of Christian, and that of Christiana and her children, he wrote other works, which alone would have rendered his name immortal. But amid all his dreamings he never dreamed of the good that this work would accomplish, nor of the world-wide fame that would gather about its author's name. Unappreciated in his own day, the

Pilgrim's Progress now ranks among the standard works of Christianity, and is applauded by every class, sect and race that it has reached throughout every clime. In the words of his homely rhyme:

"Some said, John, print it; others said, Not so;
Some said, It might do good; others said, No."

The number of editions through which it has passed is almost beyond computation. It has been issued in all kinds of type, and translated into more languages than any other book except the Bible. It is a work that deserves to be read and re-read in youth, in middle life and in old age. It is written for the most part in words of one syllable, and is therefore simple enough for a child, yet so profound that the learned philosopher may feed upon its inexhaustible store; a composition surpassing in beauty of thought and poetic diction the glories of romance; a work of the imagination, yet the embodiment of theology, and so lifelike as to convey its conceptions to the mind with the clearness of the painter's brush, and so true to experience that every one may there behold delineated some image of his own character. Obstinate, scoffing and scorning; Pliable, like supple wax, easy to heat and just as easy to cool; Evangelist, dealing his heavy blows of conviction, and then soothing with his gentle entreaty and encouraging counsel; Christian, bold, firm, decided, pressing his way resolutely to the Celestial City; Talkative, Worldly-Wiseman, Simple, Slothful, Envy, Superstition, Hypocrisy, Faithful, Hopeful, Charity;—these and others about whom he writes are not mere types, but all are living characters in this world. It is indeed one of the

most wonderful of books. Here are the live coals of genius, fanned into a flame by the fierce blasts of persecution, though no credit is due thereby to his cruel enemies.

Lord Macaulay, the ablest critic of the nineteenth century, pays Bunyan this noble tribute: "This is the highest miracle of genius—that things which are not should be as though they were, that the imagination of one mind should become the personal recollection of another. And this miracle the tinker has wrought. There is no ascent, no declivity, no resting-place, no turnstile, with which we are not perfectly acquainted. The wicket gate and the desolate swamp which separated it from the City of Destruction; the long line of road as straight as rule can make it; the Interpreter's House and all its fair shows; the prisoner in the iron cage; the palace, at the doors of which armed men kept guard, and on the battlements of which walked persons clothed all in gold; the Cross and the Sepulchre; the steep hill and the pleasant arbor; the stately front of the House Beautiful by the wayside; the low green Valley of Humiliation, rich with grass and covered with flocks—all are as well known to us as the sights of our own homes. Then we come to the narrow place where Apollyon strode right across the whole breadth of the way to stop the journey of Christian, and where afterwards the pillar was set up to testify how bravely the pilgrim had fought the good fight. As we advance the valley becomes deeper and deeper, the shade of the precipice falls blacker and blacker. The clouds gather overhead. Doleful voices, the clanking of chains, and the rushing of many feet to and fro are heard through the darkness. The way hardly discernible in gloom runs close by the mouth of

the burning pit which sends forth its flames, its noisome smoke and hideous shapes to terrify the adventurer. Thence he goes on amid the snares and pitfalls, with the mangled bodies of those who have perished lying in the ditch by his side. At the end of the long dark valley he passes the dens in which the old giants slept amidst the bones and ashes of those whom they had slain. Thence the road passes straight on through a waste moor, till at length the towers of the distant city appear before the traveler; and soon he is in the midst of the innumerable multitudes of Vanity Fair. Thence we go on by the little hill of the silver mine, through the meadows of lilies, along the banks of that pleasant river which is bordered on both sides with delicious fruit trees. On the left side branches off the path leading to that horrible castle the courtyard of which is paved with the skulls of pilgrims; and right onward are the sheepfolds and orchards of the Delectable Mountains. From the Delectable Mountains the way lies through bogs and briers of the Enchanted Ground, with here and there a bed of soft cushions spread under a green arbor. And beyond is the Land of Beulah, where the flowers and the grapes and the songs of birds never cease and where the sun shines night and day. Thence are plainly seen the golden pavements and streets of pearl on the other side of that bleak and cold river over which there is no bridge; but into which Christian and his companion plunging, lose their mortal garments and are received by the angels on the other shore and escorted to the gate of the Holy City, where showing their certificates, the gate flies open, they are clothed in shining raiment, crowns are placed upon their heads and palms in their hands, and golden

harps wherewith to sing praises unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

Such is a faint representation of a few of the royal images of this thrilling story, which along with Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Baxter's *Saints' Everlasting Rest*, and Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, will be handed down through succeeding generations as the classics of religion, and occupy in the Christian library a place second only to the Holy Bible.

Let us now turn from the book, and consider the personality of the man whose genius inspired and produced it. May we not pause a moment, however, to pluck a flower of encouragement for ourselves from the garland woven by the hand of the poor despised prisoner in jail? May we not derive a valuable lesson from his patient endurance and tireless industry? It is probable that Bunyan learned more during his imprisonment than during all the rest of his life. Indeed, this may be truly said to have been the school in which he was educated. And by education I mean, not merely a knowledge of sciences and languages, but the ability to think, to concentrate all the powers of the mind, as so many lenses, upon a given subject. Instead of repining in sadness over difficulties and losses, he betook himself to useful employment. So let us do in every sphere in which we are called to labor and suffer. It may not be our distinction to produce a *Pilgrim's Progress* or a *Paradise Lost*, but still we may do that which shall make us the benefactors of our fellow-men. There are many broad acres of opportunity yet uncultivated, and numerous fields are already white for the sickle.

After twelve long years of confinement in prison, Bunyan was released and allowed to pursue his calling unmolested. He erected new churches and formed new congregations, and everywhere crowds flocked to his ministry. He is represented as mild and affable in his manners, a model of meekness, possessing a sound judgment, quick perception and a ready wit. And although as unlearned as were some of our Lord's apostles, he confounded the wise in their wisdom and the crafty in their counsel. It is said that Charles the Second once asked the distinguished Doctor Owen "how a learned man such as he was could sit and hear an illiterate tinker prate." To which the learned Doctor replied: "May it please your Majesty, could I possess that tinker's ability for preaching, I would gladly relinquish all my learning." This incident serves to illustrate Owen's modesty and candor, as well as to show the regard in which Bunyan was held by many who moved in aristocratic circles.

It is likely that no man ever studied the Bible with greater diligence than did this tinker of Bedford. The word of God was the food for meditation as he labored or journeyed, and a feast to his soul as he pondered its sublime truths and its holy examples. Here he caught his inspiration; from this mine he dug his precious ore and gathered the gems that enriched all his writings. Let us all seek to imitate his example in this respect, and apply ourselves with new diligence to this Inspired Volume, in which the wisdom of heaven is placed at the disposal of mankind.

After his release from prison, Bunyan continued for sixteen years to preach and write and work with sleepless activity, and the first real rest he took was in August, 1688,

when he turned aside to die. Then, just as Christian lost his burden and his rags, so Bunyan shook off the sneers and jeers of an unappreciative world. His posthumous glory resembles that of Homer, of whom it is said that "for the honor of his birthplace alone seven cities vied, through which a living Homer begged his bread." And now that name whose mention once evoked a sneer is pronounced with pride and honored by the civilized world; and the churches and pulpits and cottages, and even the wooded dells, where Bunyan preached, are held in peculiar veneration. It is likely that the old jail in Bedford town is to-day as interesting to most travelers as is the stately Westminster Abbey.

But if this were his only requital, it would be poor indeed. Like Lazarus, having suffered his evil things on earth, he went to enjoy his good things in heaven. He fought his way to the Celestial City up the Hill of Difficulty, through the Slough of Despond, and across the Valley of Humiliation, with all the energy that animated the knights of the Crusades in their efforts to rescue the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the Saracen. And he has left in his example, no less than in his writings, a priceless legacy to all coming generations, adapted to inspire them to energy and unyielding devotion to truth, and to fill their hearts with the assurance of a noble reward. The victory is now won; the poor despised preacher is reaping the reward of his toil and struggle. Having suffered with Christ, he now reigns with Him. To him is given the blessedness of those who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake. Sweet is the reflection that "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy." "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

The sable curtain of darkness shall be lifted, the clouds shall break, and the noontide of glory flood the enraptured soul. Suffering is but the law of human elevation, development and progress, not only in other departments of life, but in the sphere of religion as well. But know this, that for every tear the true Christian sheds there is to be a cup of joy; for every sigh he utters, there shall be a hymn of praise; for every cross that he endures, there shall be another star in his crown. The apostle Paul, than whom no man knew better what it is to be abased and exalted, to abound and to be in want; whose labors were more abundant, whose stripes were more numerous, and whose imprisonments were more frequent than even those of Bunyan; who had also caught a vision of Paradise that others have not seen, and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful to utter;—this great apostle exclaimed: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8: 18). Let us, therefore, take courage, labor and suffer and wait with patience, knowing that in due season, if we faint not, we shall reap the reward of all our privation and toil.

Though the character and writings of this remarkable man are replete with valuable lessons, perhaps I need not further protract this discussion. The language of eulogy has been well nigh exhausted by those who have written in his praise. Poets, historians and painters have vied with each other in setting forth his claims to immortality. Learned critics have pointed out the beauties of his works and attempted to reveal the secrets of his genius. Witnesses of every clime and tongue attest his worthy fame. Everywhere

the name of John Bunyan, which Cowper says "once moved a sneer," is heralded in accents of praise. But his memory finds its noblest and most enduring monument in the grateful affections of Christian hearts. I can only bid you go, study the character, treasure the memory, and imitate the example of John Bunyan, the illiterate tinker, the persecuted prisoner of Bedford jail, the prototype of his own matchless Pilgrim, whom he shows us planted safe at last upon the battlements of heaven, where so many other pilgrims, stimulated by his inspiring allegory, have already clasped his hands and recounted the trials of their journey, and where many more, though sorely pressed and tempted in their weary pilgrimage, are hoping to arrive and join with him and that great multitude "which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

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